

INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

By
S. P. THIAGA RAJAN

Foreword
By
SYED ABDULLAH BRELVI, M
Editor, The "Bombay Chronicle"

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DEDICATORY EPISTLE

To

Dr. S. SACHCHIDANANDA SINHA, Barrister,
Ex-Finance Member, Government of Bihar and
Orissa,

Vice-Chancellor, the Patna University, and
Editor, *The Hindusthan Review*,
Patna.

My dear Sir,

In taking the liberty to associate your name with this book, by dedicating it to you, I am fully aware I am in no way adding to the esteem in which you have been held for continuously over three decades as a great publicist and as a staunch and unwearied believer in the indispensability of sound and fearless journalism in securing progress and prosperity. The cause of the Press has been with you an inborn love; so much so that whatever avocations you have followed, they have all appeared as subsidiary ones. From the time that you set your heart upon an autonomous province of Behar, you have contributed to the making of the Press in one province, and you have stood by the cause of the Press elsewhere. You have striven during this period to advance the fortunes of young men with a turn for a career in journalism, some of whom

have grown grey in the profession and attained distinction. You have been, in fact, the meeting-point of journalists from Southern and Upper India. It is most appropriate for these reasons that I should dedicate this small work to you, both as a token of my personal esteem and an expression of gratitude due to your long and honourable association with the Press. And I do this fully conscious of the many shortcomings of this publication.

Yours very sincerely,
THE AUTHOR.

FOREWORD

There is an increasing demand in India for books on journalism. The interest in journalism grows in proportion to the increase in the number of newspapers and in the influence the Press exercises in moulding opinion. But, unfortunately, there are very few books published which may be said to do adequate justice to this great and fascinating subject. Mr. S. P. Thiaga Rajan's book is one of these very few books. The increasing number of young men and women who are eager to learn all that is to be learnt about journalism and journalists will find it a rich mine of information and a valuable guide. The average reader as well as the aspiring student of journalism will find in it much that will captivate him. Mr. Thiaga Rajan is an experienced and brilliant journalist himself and by writing the book he has rendered a distinct service to Indian Journalism.

SYED ABDULLAH BRELVI,

1st Dec. 1937.

Editor, The *Bombay Chronicle*.

PREFACE

As a free-lance caught young, I have often wished for a handy volume giving the young aspirant to journalism authentic information about the many-sided activities of the Fourth Estate. In recent years, to a sense of duty left undone, the urge of friendship has been added; and the present book is the result. The view-point taken is frankly that of a practical worker in the field, with his optimism still unshaken.

I make no pretence to originality. Indeed, it is doubtful if the subject can be so treated without caricaturing it. But I may claim to have been fair to various *genre* of modern journalism. If I contribute nothing but the strands that bind this nosegay of many-coloured flowers, credit may be given for my wanderings over vast fields of ephemeral literature, to cull a bloom here for the gaiety of its colour and there a blossom for the delicacy of its perfume.

In addition to the acknowledgements elsewhere made, I have specially to mention Mr. C. H. V. Pathy, a former colleague, to whom the idea of the book is due, and Mr. M. R. Sampatkumaran, also a former colleague,—who has since forsaken this alluring field

for the more entrancing service of finance—whose labour has been invaluable. Nor should I omit to mention the Educational Publishing Company, Madras, for helping me in the publication of the book.

TANJORE,
Nov. 15, 1937

S. P. THIAGA RAJAN.

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Appendix : Two Ideals in Journalism

ERRATA

- Page 13 line 25 *for* "newspaper" *read* "a newspaper."
- „ 46 „ 16 „ "ef" „ "oi"
- „ 93 „ 5 „ "obious" „ "odious."
- „ „ „ 18 „ "Metacalfe" „ "Metcalfc."
- „ „ „ 26 „ „ „
- „ 96 „ 11 „ "country," „ "century."
- „ „ „ 19 „ "poltical" „ "political."
- „ 148 footnote 9 *for* "newsper" *read* "newspaper."
- „ 205 „ „ "Montaguet" „ "Montague."
- „ 208 line 20 *for* "weight" *read* "weigh."
- „ 244 „ 23 „ "advertismnets" *read* "advertise-
ments."
- „ 277 „ 3 *after* word "attempts" *add* word "to."
- „ 317 „ 22 *for* "govenment" *read* "government."
- 325 „ 1 „ "window-glases" *read* "window-
glasses."
- „ 348 „ 12 „ "sinplicity" *read* "simplicity."

“There can be no greater vocation than that of Journalist.”

—SISLEY HUDDLESTON

“.....The Press, which I have ever considered the tongue of the world, and which governs the sentiments of mankind more than anything else that ever did or can exist.”

—THOMAS PAINE

INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

CHAPTER I.

NEWS AND NEWSPAPERS

What is Truth, asked jesting Pilate nearly two thousand years ago; and being wise did not pause for an answer. To-day in the twentieth century, A greets B in the street with "What's the news?" and is immediately told the latest police court sensation, divorce scandal or political gossip. If people are a little puzzled when asked offhand to define News in the abstract, most at least know it when they hear or read it. All may not have what is called the "nose" for news, like some famous journalists. But people do recognise news when they see it in print, and are prepared to dub a newspaper valueless when it stints in the supply of news.

A famous definition, long familiar to the initiated, is attributed to Dana, the renowned American editor. "If a dog bites a man, it is not news: but if the man bites the dog, it

is news." There we have the substance of sensation, the double-distilled essence of the stunt. News like romance seems to savour of the strange and the unexpected. An American epigram has it that news "is what people will want to read to-morrow morning." "We will turn away from politics," says Viscount Castleross, "and review life as we find it, and marvel at the unexpectedness of events." Here speaks the voice of the journalist. And the Viscount has an apt illustration at hand. "Who, for instance, would guess that Nazareth is populated by Christian money-lenders to-day!" We have here a huge oxymoron, almost a contradiction in terms. Christian money-lenders and that at Nazareth—it is news.

Perhaps the definition is far too brief. It suggests a test and no more. A wise and witty lady* has expanded the sentence into a small paragraph: Crime is news: divorce is news: girl mothers are news: fabric gloves and doll's eyes are, for some unaccountable reason, news: centenaries of famous men are, for some still stranger reason, news: strangest of all, women are, inherently and with no activities on their part, news in a way that men are not..... If you do wrong, you are news, and if you have a bad accident, you are

*Phillip Guedella : *Man of Letters*, P. 99.

news: but if you mysteriously disappear, you are doubly and trebly news. To be news in one's life—that is something for a man. Though sometimes it comes too late to be enjoyed.'

The "Manchester Guardian" once offered prizes of two guineas and one guinea for the best definition of "News." One competitor was barely satirical when he wrote that "news is not drawn from the well of Truth, but emanates from the cave of Rumour." One aspect of news was crystallised in the somewhat epigrammatic maxim of a woman reader: "That's news—that was." But the prize-winning entries box the whole compass of possible definition. The judges awarded the first prize to the following definition on account apparently of its gravity and brevity. "News," says this short, clear and inclusive answer, "is the initial announcement of a novel or striking event, not generally known, which is of immediate interest to the greatest number of people.' Here is the recipe for a "Ragout of News," that was thought fit to receive the second prize: "Ingredient—one or two celebrities' heads; a political bone of contention; a few slices of life in the raw; a bunch of sportsmen; one or two foreign yolks; a little matrimonial pickle; a society sweet-bread, and a glass of fashion. Ingredients must be fresh, carefully prepared and

arranged with taste. Season highly, adding sugar and a rich flavouring of popular appeal. Serve as hot as possible."

Or take another illustration, indicating how it strikes men and women undergoing training for journalism. At a social gathering of the journalism students of the London University, the question was sprung by a guest as to how, if placed in an editorial position, they will deal with the following items of news: War between Brazil and Argentina, Famous Actress found Murdered, Financial Collapse of Germany, Engagement of the Prince of Wales, Abolition of the League of Nations, Resignation of the Prime Minister, 100 lives lost in British liner wreck, 500 lives lost in French pit accident, Famous scientist receives message from Mars. Voting papers were distributed to 24 men and 23 women students; and the ballot resulted in the following order of precedence: 1. Engagement of the Prince of Wales. 2. Resignation of the Prime Minister. 3. 100 lives lost in British liner wreck. 4. Abolition of the League of Nations, 5. Financial collapse of Germany. 6. Famous Actress Found Murdered. 7. Famous scientist receives message from Mars. 8. 500 lives lost in French pit accident. 9. War between Brazil and Argentina.

When dealing with News, one is often in deadly danger of descending from definition to declamation. All news is not stunt or sensation. We have the staid and sober "Times," besides the sparkling and scintillating "Daily Mail," and in our own country, the ponderous "Hindu" and the somewhat loud "Free Press Journal."† And among the men of news, we have idealists as well as money-makers, Scotts as well as Harmsworths. And it is worth while asking what the staid and the sober mean by News. Here is what Lyle Spencer has to say about it: "In its final analysis News may be defined as any accurate fact or idea that will interest a large number of readers: and of two stories, the accurate one that interests the greater number of people is the better. Strangeness, abnormality, unexpectedness, nearness of events, all are good and add value to the news, but they are not essential. The only requirements are that the story shall be accurate and shall contain facts or ideas interesting to a large number of readers."*

Or take this from a working journalist, who had long been News Editor of the old "Westminster Gazette": "If you stand up on a hill-top, and let your eyes roam over the landscape, certain things will catch your eye, and

† Has since ceased to exist.

* Quoted by Low Warren in "*Journalism from A to Z*."

interest it. And as you live your life as a newspaper man, you must imagine yourself as perched on a hill-top, watching the panorama of life. As you do so, certain things will catch your mind. These things are News. They may be queer crazes, or social developments, the doings of well-known people, and often of completely unknown people, if only they are striking enough. The quaint, the oddly interesting, anything bearing the label of novelty, all these things are news: they make people talk, they make the paper in which they appear interesting, they form a pleasant relief to all the heavy, serious and often sad things that newspapers have as well to print. It is the newspaper that, in the intervals between big events, is kept filled with bright interesting stories on an infinite variety of topics that makes most readers." *

This is perhaps as near as we can get to a definition of the ever-elusive and all-comprehensive News, which has been with Man ever since he learnt the art of speech. The cynic might object that while news certainly is something that must interest a large number of readers, it is not always considered that it should be accurate. News is fact to-day rumour to-morrow and smoke the day after.

* *"The Making of a Journalist,"* Newspaper World Press.

Descriptions only try to tell laboriously what every one knows unconsciously. For getting to know the real nature of News there is nothing like looking at a newspaper itself. Open the pages of any modern newspaper, and you have plenty of news, arranged in the order of their interest, and suitably to the traditions of the newspaper, by experts in the difficult art. The most interesting item, from the point of view of its news value, is splashed across and given the greatest prominence, except in cases where the proprietor has a political or a personal axe to grind. Every care is taken to give the reader the least amount of trouble, physical or intellectual. A hostile analysis of the items that go to make up a typical modern news-sheet was recently furnished by Mr. George Blake. Scalpel and microscope were set to work on the late Lord Riddell's hebdomedal master-piece," "The News of the World." The number in question "selected at random", was dated June 22, 1930. Mr. Blake then showed how out of a total of 2,125 inches, advertisements accounted for 644 and news of crime and passionate interest absorbed 547 inches.

Now let us take a daily newspaper; and we shall take, here again at random, a copy of the "Evening News," dated March 18, 1931. The issue illustrates alike the endless ingenuity

of the journalist as well as the infinite way news are distorted by proprietorial predilections. The date will be remembered as the eve of the famous or notorious St. Georges bye-election, when the Press Barons ran a candidate of their own, against the official Conservative candidate by way of protesting against Mr. Stanley Baldwin's leadership. The issue of the paper under examination is mainly intended to serve as an election propaganda sheet. Under the guidance of trained experts in mob psychology, it seeks to bring under hypnotic control the vast body of voters. With this preliminary explanation in mind, one can easily see and appreciate the display and get-up of the paper.

On page 1, we have the streamer-splash—"Gandhi is watching St. Georges"—one of the slogans which the Rothermere Press invented for the occasion. The campaign against Mr. Baldwin is reinforced by mendacious propaganda against Indian nationalism, as Mr. Baldwin is known to have shown reluctance to oppose the liberal and conciliatory policy which his friend, Lord Irwin, was trying to follow in India. The streamer splash is followed up by a "write-up" fulminating against any compromise with the claims of Indian Nationalism, in which is incorporated in leaded type a Reuter cable, 30 to 35 words long,

about an obscure clash between Hindus and Moslems in some corner of the Punjab. To this precious bit of news, the copy-writers have given an introduction of about 200 words in double-column setting, explaining the necessity of pursuing in India a policy of the "firm hand and no nonsense," and the credulous are assured that "Gandhi is watching St. Georges." The follow-on matter relates to the danger of anarchy in India and to the sense of responsibility shown by the voters abroad, who are hurrying home to save India for the Empire. The double-column splash is followed by a single-column article from the pen of a special correspondent enlarging on the same theme, and trying to impress on the readers the slogan-phrase by the process of hypnotic reiteration. This article is not concluded in this page, but is carried over to and concluded in page six. The Gandhi business is very skilfully done, so that no one can complain of being bored. We have a centre-box, "Put Petter in and Put Gandhi Out"—Sir Ernest Petter is the Rothermere candidate—and another box giving the latest unemployment figures and suggesting that Petter is the man to set everything right. We have also a three-column cartoon of Gandhi, who is represented as anxiously listening at a

telephone receiver for news of the bye-election: the anti-Gandhi or pro-Petter votes getting magically transformed into-boiling water, poured into the wires at the other end of the ocean: they are about to rush on Gandhi and overwhelm him. So much in page one about the stunt of the day, the "talking point" for the mob of voters, Apart from this, there are striking accounts of a millionaire's will by which his wife stood disinherited, the Queen's drive, and an order from the Ministry of Transport and a case in which a will was disputed. All these are news items of considerable interest and are given due importance. There is an article by Lord Rothermere under the alliterative headline, Press Peers and Politics, in which he tries to defend himself at the expense of Mr. Baldwin. This article is continued on page ten.

The second page contains the Diary of a Social Gossip and a children's cartoon. The next page is devoted to ladies' fashions, and the fourth is the children's page. Page five is again a news page, containing accounts of a nursery fire, a shipwreck, and a petty case against a philosopher. We have also the announcement of a mass meeting at Albert Hall on the question of India, under the suggestive headline, "Britain Must Rule India." This page contains two boxes: "Gandhi is watching St. Georges."

and "Petter mean better business." The story of a club-quarrel and its legal sequel is splashed in the next page. It also contains the continuation of the main feature of the day from page one. There are three boxes: "Gandhi is watching St. Georges", "Petter means better business," and Lord Morley's opinion on the necessity of British rule in India. Little stories of the election propaganda are featured, and we are assured that it is the most human election within living memory. A plan of St. Georges with the location of the polling booths is also given for the convenience of the electors. All this takes the upper half of the page, and the lower half is covered by a big advertisement. We now pass on to the picture page. This is also skilfully harnessed for election propaganda. The portraits of various ladies and gentlemen who have decided to vote for Sir Ernest Petter are prominently featured, and below each picture the letter press gives as briefly as possible the reason for such support. One will do as an example. "I have a brother in India," said Mrs. C. Brown of Cumberland Street, "and I know that a firm hand is necessary there."

Page eight is the leader page, and we have a leading article under the slogan heading. It is not merely a discourse on the wisest and best

possible Indian policy. It also contains an extract from a letter published by the "Daily Mail" in the morning about a Moslem audience at Delhi who jeered at the Emperor's figure, when thrown on the screen, all, it would seem, out of disgust at the Government's disgraceful surrender to Gandhi. By its side, we have the "Talk of the Day" by the social pragraphist, a poem, a short chatty article on actors, another on the boat race, and a third on hats. Page nine is again an important news page. There is the Gandhi streamer. In the top centre of the page there is a photograph of a lion sleeping, with Gandhi's smiling face as an inset. And the readers are told that Gandhi is smiling, because the British lion is sleeping. There are three boxes featuring slogans already familiar to the reader. There is an article in which Lord Rothermere gives his own version of the famous Zinovieff letter business as against Marlowe's. In addition we also get an interesting murder case and a divorce suit. Page ten continues "Press Peers and Politics," and has an article on the next season's pheasants. We may now come to what may be described as a regular gossip page, there is gossip about films and film stars, about the City and finance, about sailors and aeroplanes. On page twelve, we have the serial, a cross-word competition, and gossip about sports.

Then there is the sports page, which contains news about golf, soccer, hockey and racing. Page fourteen is full of advertisements, and page fifteen deals with finance. The last page (16) is a miscellaneous one, and contains some news which arrived too late to be featured in the preceding pages. There is a Gandhi box, a photo of the Queen visiting some girls' school, an income-tax case, an obscenity case, news about racing and the latest Wall Street quotations.

We may take the foregoing as the description of a fairly representative news sheet. Though proprietorial passions allotted so much space to an election stunt, it serves as an illustration of the temper and mood in which a modern newspaper is got up, full of crime and divorce and sport, with occasional politics, more or less rancid. Add to this the stimulant of accidents, the women's page and the children's corner, and the gamble on the Stock Market, and we have a daily summary of world-history that most people consider satisfactory.

A newspaper is a reflex of life. As somebody said, newspaper is a mirror reflecting the public, a mirror more or less defective, but still a mirror. Northcliffe once told Tom Clarke: "You are looking at life through a peep-hole for all these people," referring to the millions of

readers. He was in one sense right. If you are a highbrow you may object that the newspaper is not so much a reflection of life as a distorted caricature ; that it betrays an atrocious sense of values and that its emphasis is all wrong ; and finally, that scoops, stunts and sensations are not all life. It was Lord Morley who observed that newspapers were huge engines for keeping discussion on a low level. And a high authority of our own day has said that "the newspaper mind habitually thinks in circulations," it "gathers up the popular voices and gives them back as opinions"; and the "temptation to make opinion conform to the supposed prejudices of reader and advertiser becomes all but irresistible." There is force in this criticism, as we shall see later on. Here we are but concerned with a mere description of the functions of a newspaper. According to an American writer, quoted by Mr. Low Warren, "The newspaper publishes the motion picture of life's yesterday and to-day and portrays the drama of which all others are but copies: art but imitation, religion the warning, society and politics the plot—earnest, intense acting—with human success the object, and obituaries the end." Mr. J. A. Spender, whose knowledge and authority are beyond question, sets down the three functions of a modern newspaper thus:

(1) it supplies the public with news; (2) it is a medium of advertisements; (3) it furnishes opinion and comment on affairs of public importance.

It may perhaps be as well to refer to other functions that seem somehow to fall within the scope of a newspaper. We have not many examples of what may be called institutional newspapers in the world. But there is one newspaper in South America, which provides for its readers a public hall and covered courtyard for meetings, legal and medical advice, a commercial museum, chemical laboratory, fencing and language schools and restaurant. La Presna, of Buenos Aires, founded in 1869 as a four-page paper, has for some years now been giving 20 to 30 pages per day. It is said to have the largest circulation in South America. Years ago an ingenious scheme was adumbrated by the "Swarajya" of Madras of the barter system of enrolling subscribers; but the thing fell flat. Whatever might be thought of this and other aspects of newspaper activity, it is still true that News is the main business of a newspaper. Failing in this, it fails entirely.

CHAPTER II

THROUGH THE AGES

"The things that people talk about," Northcliffe once declared, "are News. And what do they mostly talk about? Other people, their failures and successes, their joys and sorrows, their money and their food, and their peccadilloes."* News, in this comprehensive and universal sense, began when Man began to jabber and stumbled on speech, not to speak of the technique of broadcasting danger-signals that was developed by gregarious animals. The pial or some shady recess in the tropics, and the fire-side in cooler climes served as the primitive clearing house of news. To this day we may find in remote rural areas, free from the contraptions of modern civilisation this kind of pre-Marconian wireless telegraphy in brisk action. That is news at its simplest, at its crudest. And here we have journalism also at its simplest; for is not journalism but a "reflection of life," accurate, quick, sure, and vivid?

It is an interesting epigram that whereas the ancients believed in eternity the moderns

* Tom Clarke: *My Northcliffe Diary*.

believe in Time. Shelley's superb sonnet on Ozymandias tells of a monarch who wanted to boost himself. That is a very common failing with the eminent; and there are not a few Princes or other potentates to-day who are obsessed by the same ambition. But they would set about their task in a very different manner from the long-forgotten king of kings. Ozymandias set up a stone tablet in which he recorded his exploits for the edification of his frightened contemporaries and a forbearing posterity. Our modern Princes would look to the Press. The final result, however it may seem to support the epigram at the beginning of the paragraph, is essentially the same. The stone tablet survives as the object of antiquarian researches; the news-sheets that boosted our modern Princes might be found among moth-eaten archives by curious historians of the Press. Nevertheless it is well to note that Shelley's sonnet immortalises an ancient newspaper. Ozymandias was hardly an original monarch in this respect, whatever may have been his blood-curdling achievements in other directions. It was a regular practice with the Ptolemys of Egypt to inscribe State documents on shaped stones and place them in public places. Only yesterday, so to say, the newspapers announced that a stone "newspaper" of

the time of the Roman Emperor Trajan had been unearthed among the Roman remains at Ostia. It consists of a stone slab covered with an inscription of 56 lines dealing with events in Rome and the Empire during the reign of Trajan.

Nearer home, in India, the Emperor Asoka set up rock edicts in different parts of his extensive domains to proclaim the path of salvation. Asoka's object was different from Ozymandias'; but the means adopted by both were the same. Enduring rock took the place of flimsy paper in India until recent times. Grants from Kings were recorded in stone or metal. Nor should we forget that homely instrument of publicity in the hoary mists of antiquity, which has survived to the present day, the *bataki* or the tom-tom. It served State and society very effectively. In Sudraka's celebrated drama, "The Little Clay-Cart," one scene is given to depicting the way in which State executioners went about advertising the death sentence on a man (wrongly) convicted of murder, with the dual object, we may suppose, of affording excitement and preventing crime. Spies in ancient India were diligent collectors of news. How well organised was the intelligence department in Moghul India we shall see by and by.

These hints from antiquity, interesting though they be, do not explain the twentieth century newspapers; they merely serve to show that the passion for news is no new or modern phenomenon. Only the ways of its manifestation and the means of the satisfaction thereof have changed. Gossip has evolved from speech to print. And, to be sure, the advent of *Demos* in weighty affairs of government means a vast change in the quality of the gossip. Naturally enough, it is in ancient Greece, which first presented the world with democracy, that we must look for the earliest prototype of the modern newspaper. Aristophanes may rightly be regarded as the ancestor of the modern journalist.

The Old Comedy of Greece is one of the most curious forms of the dramatic art. It was built upon passing events, unconsidered trifles of the moment, around which the author essayed to give a humorous discourse on politics or religion. Jebb's summary of its origin and growth explains lucidly its kinship of spirit with the modern newspaper. The eleven complete plays of Aristophanes are practically the only surviving specimens of this ancient form of Greek entertainment. Each of these plays has for its nucleus what a modern journalist would regard as the germ of a talking-

point or stunt. For instance, in those days there was walking the streets of Athens to the scandal of all respectable citizens a peculiar person called Socrates. Son of a stone-mason and himself an ex-soldier, he proved himself to be a veritable thorn in the sides of well-fed complacency. His favourite recreation was talking with all and sundry. With an admiring circle of young satellites around him he would set about inviting Tom, Dick or Harry, or their Greek equivalents, for all manner of discussion. Tom may regard himself as a pandit in politics, Dick an expert in economics, and Harry a savant in science. Each of these gentlemen would be ruthlessly cross-examined by a man who professed to know nothing of their pet subjects. And yet so searching were these questions that they would retire from the field abashed and stunned by a revelation of their own abysmal ignorance. Rhetoricians have given the name, "Socratic irony," to this kind of pastime. Pleasant enough entertainment for the spectators, but torture of the worst kind to the victims. Well, Aristophanes was a conservative by temperament, and he did not like the ruthless way in which Socrates dissected all popular notions. He thought he had a good subject for a comedy, and he wrote the "Clouds." To-day it would have been easier to ridicule

Socrates. Some silly cartoons, a leading article with a catch-phrase, and a mischievous misrepresentation of his principles in two or three special articles over the name of some persons in the public eye, would have done the trick. And these would be dead as a door-nail a few days hence. But Aristophanes gave us a play about Socrates that lives after the passage of two thousand years.

The ancient Greeks used the comic theatre as the forum for political and religious discussion. To-day we get our news, and very frequently our views, from the daily press. In the days of Aristophanes, the comedy was a news sheet, with a get-up and display calculated to support the leading article, namely the views of the play-wright on any given topic of public interest. This news-sense was not the sole property of the dramatists, however. Xenophon in his *Retreat of the Ten Thousand* reveals himself as the forerunner of all war correspondents. Herodotus, the father of European history unkindly called the Father of Lies, was a talented snatcher-up of unconsidered trifles, and was both journalist and historian. Herodotus had an incredible nose for news. His history is a treasure-house of tit bits.

Passing on to Rome, we find here as elsewhere that Rome organised where Greece laid the

foundations. In the second century before Christ, Rome was publishing official annals which were discontinued in 133 B. C. About 70 years later Julius Caesar ordered that an official record of noteworthy events in Rome should be kept by public officers day by day. Variouslly known as the *Acta Diurna*, the *Acta Populi*, the *Acto Publica*, or merely as the *Acta*, these constitute the earliest known examples of a daily journal. The *Acta* were government publications containing registers of births and deaths, particulars of corn supply, and of payments into the treasury, court news, decrees. They were daily exposed in a public place on a whitened board called the "album," and after a reasonable time they were taken and preserved. The *Acta* were regularly published till the transfer of the capital to Constantinople. In fact they seem to have been discontinued only about 461 A. D. The method of publicity followed by the Roman Government is obviously one of perennial value and must recall recent events in this country, where the authorities had to prohibit, in Bangalore, an unlicensed news-sheet, being a black-board, and, in Bombay, during the height of the Gandhian campaign, the *boi-patrikas*, so-called, meaning sand-newspapers, in which daily news were written up doubtless in ways

that pleased their writers best. Slave copyists were also employed in Rome to circulate manuscript journals. The collectors of news were contemptuously called "operarii"—workmen. When Augustus forbade the publication of the proceedings of the Senate, news of Rome became its main feature. It is interesting to note that Cicero had a number of copies made of the depositions against the conspirators in the Catiline affair and circulated them widely.

Ancient Rome was not alone in publishing a daily official record. China began a Peking Gazette in 621 A.D., which enjoyed the privilege of an unbroken history of nearly thirteen centuries till the Fall of the Empire. Professor Giles says that it was not exactly a newspaper, because it confined itself to court news, lists of official appointments, promotions and so forth. Official ideas about news have changed but very slowly; and one could not expect the Chinese Government of those days to think of anything else than what concerned them immediately as of the slightest importance. But one thing is certain. China did not follow up the Peking Gazette with anything even remotely analogous to the modern newspaper, despite the fact that China knew of printing and paper long before Europe.

We must, therefore, come back again to Europe to trace the beginnings of journalism proper. In the Dark Ages there was little inducement to the publication of regular journals. The insatiable longing of the human-heart for gossip, scandal and things of that sort was satisfied by travellers' tales and stories of the politics of the parish pump. In the sixteenth century occasionally ballads were written about contemporary wars and crimes and hawked about in the streets. It is interesting to note, by the way, how writers of doggerel in Tamil drive to this day a lucrative trade in verses for the occasion celebrating crime and accidents. About this time statesmen and aristocrats employed "intelligencers" to supply them with news-letters recording the happenings of the time. Perhaps the practice originated in the times of excitement that accompany a war. Anyway there are interesting collections of these documents which serve to show that a nose for news is not the special monopoly of the twentieth century journalist. Apart from news-letters, however, rudimentary journals were beginning to make their appearance in Germany, Austria and Italy about the beginning of the sixteenth century or a little earlier. Mr. Ockham notes that "embedded in Continental archives is to be found at least one copy of a contem-

porary account of Columbus' voyages to America, recorded while his journeyings still represented the latest news." The words "journal," "gazette," and "coranto," testify to the important part played by Italy in the evolution of the modern art of journalism. In the midst of the sixteenth century written newspapers were circulated in Venice. These were called *Gazetti*, because they were to be read on payment of a "gazetta," a small coin of the period.

However, the earliest extant new-sheet dates back to the beginning of the seventeenth century—the "*Avisa Relation Oder Zeitung*," of Berlin, published in 1609. It was followed by the "*Nieuwe Tidijsingen*" published at Antwerp in 1616. It was once thought that there was an Elizabethan newspaper in the "*English Mercurie*": but it is now shown to have been a forgery. The first English newspaper dates only from 1622—Nathaniel Butter's "*Weekly News*," which appeared on August 2nd of the year, and dealt exclusively with German wars. Before this there had been occasional pamphlets of news, but none was issued regularly. Eight years earlier, we find Burton complaining that most people do not read at all and "If they read a book at any time.....it is an English chronicle, Sir Huen

of Bordeaux, Amadis de Gaul etc., a play-book, or some pamphlet of news." For a long time to come the newspapers managed to hold on to a precarious existence, frowned by the State which considered the publication of news to be a serious interference with its own special monopoly, and denounced by the highbrows of society and the arts as fit mental pabulum for the credulous and the vulgar. We must remember that the claims of the Stuart Government to control the thoughts of its citizens through licensing every work to be published before it was sent out roused Milton to his noble effort for the freedom of thought. The sub-title for the *Aeropagetica* is *A Plea for Unlicensed Printing*. In England there had been a journalistic martyr as early as the days of Titus Oates. Titus swore evidence against one Edward Coleman, (secretary to the Duke of York and writer of news-letters to various gentlemen in the country) and sent him to the scaffold. Scroggs was the judge and the notorious Jeffreys the prosecutor. Another fearless journalist was very nearly a victim to the Oates scandal, which he exposed from time to time. L'Estrange, who published the "*Observer*," however, lived to get a knighthood from James II in 1685.

It is to the eighteenth century we must look for the first appearance of a regular news-

paper-reading public. The coffee-houses of those days seem to have served the purpose of modern clubs; they were the clearing-houses of political and social scandal: the indolent aristocrats who ruled and the literary men whom they patronised would discuss politics there to their hearts' content. The essay as a literary form was becoming fashionable and men of genius began to ply the journalist's calling. Swift descended to political pamphleteering; even the prim and sedate Addison, author of the forgotten classical tragedy, "Cato," was not above instructing the ignorant many on nice points of culture: and, finally, Defoe, "a bonnie fetcher, whatever else he was," proved himself to be a peerless newsman. It has been well said of him that he does not waste words, goes straight for the subject and is one of the best models that the journalist, young or old, can keep before him. His "Journal of the Plague," Dr. Mead has described as an account by an eye witness, though it was a purely fictitious composition written some sixty years after the event. Not that the leading lights of literature were content to regard themselves merely as journalists, or were willing to look with kindly feelings at the new vocation that the Spirit of the Age was mysteriously ushering into existence; which in truth was not wanting in its humane side, as witness

the papers, in the Tatler, the Spectator the Examiner and the Guardian of about this time. Still Dr. Johnson's meditations on the pervading hunger of the time for news represents the estimate that the literati of those days attached to this profession: "Journals are daily multiplied without increase of knowledge. The tale of the morning paper is told in the evening and the narratives of the evening are brought again in the morning. These repetitions do indeed waste time but do not shorten it. The most eager peruser of news is tired before he has completed his labours and many a man who enters the coffee-house in his night-gown and slippers is called away to his shop or his dinner before he has well considered the state of Europe."* What will the Sage say about our own habit of publishing half a dozen special editions of the evening paper, making a mountain of every little molehill of news?

An upstart profession cannot perhaps expect better treatment from the professors of old-established trades like versifying or moralising. But whereas every panegyrist has been patronised from time immemorial by prince or patrician, Governments from the very beginning were jealous of journalists. They had yet to understand that the vendors of news

* *Idler* 1798.

could serve as powerful allies as well as discontented enemies. The old licensing laws were in force in England till the reign of William and Mary. Then they were allowed to lapse, and for a few years the journalist enjoyed peace. He utilised the truce to consolidate his position and somehow made his art one of the hand-maidens of the Goddess of Fashion. But can a flourishing trade ever hope to avoid for long the attention of a harassed and hawk-eyed Chancellor? The sword of Damocles fell in the year 1732—stamp duties were levied on periodicals. And for more than a century and a half they continued to pay an egregious tribute to the Treasury, by way of stamp duties and advertisement taxes. Mr. Low Warren quotes the following malicious reflections of Addison on the stamp duty: "This is the day on which many eminent authors will probably publish their last works. I am afraid that few of our weekly historians, who are men above all others who delight in war, will be able to subsist under a stamp duty with an approaching peace. In short the necessity of carrying a stamp and the impracticability of notifying a bloody battle will, I am afraid, concur to the sinking of those thin folios which have every other day related to us the history of Europe for several years past. A facetious friend of mine, who loves a

pun, calls this present mortality 'the fall of the leaf.'"

It is towards the end of the eighteenth century that we find the beginning of modern journalism. And it received a sudden and extraordinary impetus from the abolition of the newspaper stamp duty by Mr. Bright's Act in 1854. A score of years after Johnson's meditations on the multiple folly of mankind in rushing after news with indecent haste, John Walter the First founded the London *Times* which ranks among the greatest journals of the world. The date was 1st January, 1785. The original name was cumbrous beyond description, and would have put too great a tax on the energies and the education of the average newsboy—nothing less than "Daily Universal Register." Three years later the founder thought better, and while unwilling to relinquish the first name, tacked on to it the now famous name. It was originally intended to give reports of Parliamentary proceedings and review home and foreign affairs. John Walter had his share of the tender attentions of the law: he was prosecuted several times for libel, and actually imprisoned from 1789 to 1791 for reflecting disrespectfully on the sons of George III. He was succeeded by John Walter the Second whom Lord Northcliffe, according to Simonis, regarded as the real inven-

tor of modern journalism. A most enterprising journalist, he was considered by the wiseacres of the day to be continually within an ace of ruin on account of what they regarded as his extravagant exploits in the hunt of news. He had the gumption to engage steam-packets for the exclusive service of his journal, and when railways were new he made use of engines to hasten the transmission of news. Refusing to accept the news service supplied by government, he organised a staff of special correspondents to gather news in foreign countries. He printed the *Times* by steam in 1814.

Along with the *Times* many daily newspapers were started during the century, and some of them continue to this day. In fact, the *Times* comes at the bottom of a list of veterans, which Mr. Low Warren has given us. The Worcester Journal is the oldest, having been in existence from 1690, while the *Morning Post*, "the Empire's senior daily," dates from 1772. All this serves to fix the date of the founding of the Modern Press pretty definitely. In the words of Mr. Ockham "If we strike a mean between the *Daily Courant*, (1709) and the *Morning Post*, (1772), we may say that the newspaper has enjoyed some two centuries of vigorous life. It has thus witnessed the birth of the Industrial Age and its offspring, Mechanical Transport,

has seen the formation of the United States of America, the peopling of Canada and Australia, the fall of most European thrones, the development of great communities in South America, and the shifting of the centre of gravity of political power from the semi-instructed few to the uninstructed many."* We must also note in passing that it is from 1774 that the records of the Houses of Parliament are kept, and that previous to this date the journalists had much ado in tapping this source of interest. Dr. Johnson used to write Parliamentary debates in the forties of the eighteenth century. And according to Boswell they were on his conscience for a long time, for they were very often "the mere coinage of his imagination."

The nineteenth century saw the birth of advertisement and the removal of the shackles that bound the press in England. It was the age of the great editors who could make and unmake cabinets and policies by an appeal to the reason of the ruling class, and, when, very often editors moved in close social intercourse with the politicians. It was an age of infinite leisure and seriousness. Politics were really a serious affair, and full reports of speeches were dutifully read. There was no need for hurry, and the emphasis was all on accuracy and exhaus-

* *Stentor.*

tive completeness. Delane of the *Times* was the most typical and influential editor of his age. A single day of his life and how it brought him into contact with a vast variety of interests was recorded by the *Times* in reviewing his *Life* by his nephew, Arthur Dasent. "His horse was brought to his chambers in Sergeant's Inn in the afternoon, and he would ride it slowly down to Westminster and there spend some time in the House of Commons or House of Lords, learning the political situation of the day, then ride on quietly to Lady Palmerston's or Baroness Rothschild's, and catch the tone of social gossip, then come back to the Athaeneum or the Reform Club, and learn the drift of opinion there. Besides this, he had his hand on the public pulse through the correspondence which reached this paper and the whole became formed into a clear image in his mind. He is well described by a correspondent in these pages as the best informed man in England, and perhaps in Europe." Among his achievements are his exposure of the mania for speculation which marred the early history of railway development in England, and the blunders made by the Government in the management of the Crimean War. He forced Lord Palmerston to apologise to the Neapolitan Government for helping the insurgents, and successfully threw in his weight

against the proposal that Britain should go to the aid of Denmark against Germany in 1864. He was a man of considerable enterprise, having organised a special express from Alexandria to London in 1845. But towards the end of his reign the general news service of the *Times* began to show a falling off, and then set in a decline which was effectively arrested only by Lord Northcliffe. At the same time the *Daily Telegraph* in the hand of Levy gained a reputation for an excellent foreign news service, which it retains to the present day. Towards the the end of the century W. T. Stead, George Newnes, Cyril Arthur Pearson and Alfred Harmsworth brought about a revolution which entirely changed the face of English journalism, the story of which must be reserved for the next chapter.

So far we have paid little attention to the fact that journalism is an industry and not merely an art. As an industry it is dependent on the inventions that we associate with printing and its accessories, no less than those connected with the telegraph and the wireless. It is well to note that John Walter the First was even more interested in "logography", a new method in printing based on composing by words instead of by letters. "The history of the newspapers," says an International Labour Office publication

on Life and Conditions of Work of Journalists, "is punctuated by a number of inventions which enabled journalism to make prodigious bounds. First of all, a little after 1810 came the printing machine, displacing the old hand press which only allowed of printing of a few hundred copies, and raising the output tenfold at a single stroke. Next, in 1814, there was the organisation and the centralisation of the manufacture of ink, with which previously each printer had to occupy himself in his workshop. A little later there was the improvement in type-founding which doubled the production of type. About 1844 the telegraph made its appearance, an invention which was destined to enable the newspaper to become an instantaneous informant of the most distant happenings. In 1850 came the invention of wood pulp paper, which prevented the starvation of the newspaper, by providing the press abundantly with the raw material. The same invention led to another invention, equally of capital importance, when twelve years later Hoe built in America the first rotary printing machine which, thanks to continued improvement, enables a newspaper of 64 pages to be printed off nowadays at the rate of more than 25,000 copies an hour. Finally, we have the invention of the type setting machines, the lino-type and mono-type, which

completely changed the process of typographical composition followed for more than five centuries, and synchronised type-setting with the more accelerated pace of printing.

“Between 1830 and 1840 occurred another event, concerned not with machinery but with the financial organisation of the paper and fraught with the greatest consequences for the future. It was about this time that the idea spread of looking for the revenue of the paper not in receipts from sales, but in an auxiliary power—advertising. From that time, the newspaper, having become cheap, was easily sold, penetrated everywhere increased its circulation, and by this very means, obtained new resources from advertising, which found in the newspaper a wider field for propaganda and paid for it.

“All these material means allowed of a prodigious development of the Press, a development facilitated by the progress of democracy and education which created the need, and by the increase of capital which furnished the means. The newspaper thus rapidly became what is now—a factor which plays such a part in the life of to-day that it would be difficult to picture the world without it. The newspaper is everywhere. It has transformed social life. The news, judgments, and opinions which had to be sought in former times in the street, in drawing

rooms and ante-chambers, now travel much more quickly, in much greater quantity and from much more remote spots, into our very homes. They are so indispensable, we are so accustomed to knowing what goes on in the world, that it is impossible to imagine a great nation suddenly deprived of newspapers for any considerable time. In such circumstances, the nation would doubtless appear as though struck with paralysis. These thousands of sheets, which are daily scattered among the crowds of our towns and reach the remotest recesses of our countryside, are very like the nerve-impulses of present-day civilisation."

CHAPTER III

MAKERS OF MODERN JOURNALISM

A runaway engine can put forward serious claims to be regarded as the true founder of the Popular Press of to-day. At any rate, like the more famous case of John Watt and the steaming kettle, the runaway engine lit the train laid by other hands and other forces: according to Herd it inspired the *Tit-Bits*, and opened a new chapter in the history of modern journalism.

In order to understand the origins of the tremendous changes that revolutionised journalism at the end of the last century, it is necessary to retrace our steps somewhat. The newspapers of the nineteenth century catered to a restricted public, the so-called ruling classes, the professional man and the club-wallah. They liked to have solid stuff. The life of John Thaddeus Delane was reviewed by Stead under the expressive caption: "The Prime Minister of the Public (Limited)." Delane, as Stead said, "confined his loiterings to the roosting places of the Upper Ten. He lived and moved and had his being in the great little world of the five-penny public.

For down to 1861 the price of the *Times* was five pence. Six pound ten was the annual subscription of the *Times* and £6-10-0 per annum in those days was even more effective as a tariff of exclusion than it would be to-day.”* What did one find, asked Lord Northcliffe long afterwards of these daily newspapers: “An immense police court reporting, occupying on some occasion a whole page. From Canada and the United States hardly anything came except by way of Reuters. Paris on the other hand was the very fount of journalistic wealth under these unenterprising people, for news from Paris was cheap, and the French journals were readily to be got. Germany at that time did not interest this country at all.....Parliament was very fully reported, space being given to Toms, Dicks and Harrys whose views were of no importance, and that despite the fact that a Parliamentary Commission in the House of Commons had reported years ago that the additional space demanded by newspapermen in the House was not needed, because it had been ascertained that the public do not read long reports.”† Northcliffe described the newspaper of those days as unreadable. “It was made up of Parliamentary reports at great length; of speeches outside

* *Review of Reviews*, May 1908.

† Macnair Wilson : *Lord Northcliffe*.

Parliament reported word for word ; of the proceedings of law-courts, police courts, criminal courts ; of long dissertations on foreign politics from correspondents from abroad, who thought it no part of their duty to describe the life of the people they were living amongst. The result of all this dullness was that the newspapers had small circulations. One boasted that it sold 25,000 copies a day, and advertised this as the largest circulation in the world, which it probably was.”*

There was, however, a tradition of respectability and decorum behind all this dullness. But it ignored the tremendous fact that the Demos was becoming literate. People imagined that a literate populace was the same thing as a literary and cultivated people ; that it would read serious stuff ; scientists hoped to make the man in the street manifest a noble enthusiasm for the pursuit of Truth in the abstract ; professors of literature fondly expected that the educated masses would take to the study of Milton and Chaucer. Alas, there came disillusionment. The masses wanted a different kind of reading matter to while away their time. Few understood and fewer still dared to provide for the tastes of the common multitude. So the years were passing on, and the people

* Hamilton Fyfe : *Northcliffe*.

thought that the newspapers were not for them, naturally.

About this time a young man, who could add the pounds, shillings and pence columns of an account book at the same time, and who had risen from an apprenticeship in a London firm to the position of the representative of a well-known fancy goods firm in Manchester, was scanning the pages of the newspapers of the day with disappointment. He noted their dullness. One day he dug out from amid much unpromising stuff a lively account of a runaway engine and the dramatic rescue of two children. This interested him, and he exclaimed to his wife: "Now that is what I call a tit-bit. Why doesn't somebody bring out a paper containing nothing but tit-bits like this?" The idea took shape. The story goes that George Newnes regularly read out such interesting odds and ends to his wife. And the thought struck him that what he found interesting might interest others also. Finally at the age of thirty he determined to venture on the enterprise.

George Newnes had ideas, but he lacked capital. He tried to interest other people in his ideas. But most of them laughed at him, and none thought it safe to trust his money on such a scheme. So Newnes had to start off his own

bat; and he realised the initial outlay by starting a vegetarian restaurant in Manchester and selling it for a good round sum as soon as it began to show profits. At last on October 30, 1881, the *Tit-Bits* appeared at Manchester., Six weeks after it was born, a firm of publishers who refused a credit of £ 500 to Newnes when he started the paper offered him £ 16,000 for it: a few months later a London publisher offered £ 30,000. But Newnes had no intention of selling. In 1884 he transferred his office to London. The runaway engine had justified itself.

But *Tit-Bits* was a social portent. It gave its readers what interested them rather than what ought to interest them. Between the two ideals there was a colossal difference, which few were keen-sighted enough to perceive. Alfred Harms-worth, struggling in London as a free-lance, with the insight of genius, alone among all the leading lights of Fleet Street, saw the true significance of *Tit-Bits*. "The Board Schools," he said, "are turning out hundreds of thousands of boys and girls annually who are anxious to read. They do not care for the ordinary newspaper, they have no interest in Society, but they will read anything which is simple and is sufficiently interesting. The man who produced *Tit-*

Bits has got hold of a bigger thing than he imagines. He is only at the beginning of a development which is going to change the whole face of journalism. I shall try to get in with him. We could start one of these papers for a couple of thousand pounds, and we ought to be able to make the money. At any rate I am going to get the money."*

That was the true genesis of "Answers to Correspondents," which Northcliffe started some time later. Its contributors included Thomas Hardy, Jerome K. Jerome, Sir A. Conan Doyle, John Strange Winter and Max Pemberton. Harmsworth had noted that people were eager to read the column entitled "Answers to Correspondents." Why not make a journal full of it? It would be a readers' paper in a more intimate way than anything else on the market. In the first issue of the paper, which appeared on June 2, 1888, Harmsworth wrote: "Our object is to answer questions addressed to us. We shall answer all private matters by post. If on the other hand you ask us a question on a really interesting subject, we will pop the answer in our paper, which will in a week or so consist mainly of answers to correspondents." James Henderson, who owned a few papers, to which Harmsworth

* Sir Max Pemberton : *Lord Northcliffe*.

had contributed articles, and immortal in literary history as the man who brought the manuscript of a story entitled "Sea Cook" from R. L. S., and changed it to "Treasure Island," watched over the scheme with kindly encouragement and prophesied that soon the name would be shortened to "Answers." So it happened. As with the name, the policy has also slightly changed: it is no longer exclusively confined to answers to correspondents, though they continue to occupy an important position in the make up of the journal.

Newnes had familiarised the idea of novel competitions to attract readers to his paper. In 1883 he gave away a house as a prize on condition that it was named "Tit-Bits Villa." Another time he buried five tubes, each containing hundred sovereigns, in different parts of the country and published a story in his weekly with clues towards finding the buried treasure. Any one who solved the problem and found the money was to have it. The competition created a great stir and the circulation leapt up. Yet another of Newnes' original ideas was to offer a job in his office to the successful solver of a series of questions published weekly in the *Tit-Bits*. Pearson was the winner, and he soon made himself one of the most notable figures in the history of the development of the

popular press. Pearson's contribution to the competition game was the "Missing Word." Newnes had also offered his readers £ 100 free insurance against railway accidents.

Harmsworth, after his "Answers" began to show a moderate success, fell to thinking of devising means to startle the country with an absolutely original competition, and thus make his mark. Newnes had preceded him in the field, and his paper would remain at best a successful imitation of the *Tit-Bits*, unless he could advertise his originality. And soon he had his inspiration. If he offered the winner £ 1 a week for life it would be a stunner. In those days it was the average income of a working man, and the prize would mean a competency for life for some one. But there were difficulties in devising a proper competition. To the problem there must be one and only one solution. There was no use in dividing the prize among many winners. So Harmsworth decided that it must be some kind of guess, which must be above suspicion and sufficiently striking to the imagination. He soon solved his difficulties. He announced that he would give a prize of one pound a week for life to the person who stated with the least error the amount of bullion in the Bank of England on the 4th December, 1889. This offer startled the country as Harmsworth

expected it would. "The Answers" leapt to fame in a moment. Every one began to talk about it, and even the sedate and stately denizens of the Fleet Street had to take notice of the popular excitement about Harmsworth's weekly. At a single stroke Harmsworth had made his name and money.

But Fleet Street was prejudiced. It turned up its nose at this new way of making the public dictate topics for the journalist. That had never been the case before. Like a friend, philosopher and guide rolled into one, the journalist had mainly decided the tastes and topics of the public. He knew what ought to interest them. "Six hundred years ago," Northcliffe was fond of saying, "there was near the site of the *Times* office a monastery, the home of the Black Friars, recluses who lived remote from the world. The same kind of men inhabit Printing House Square to this day." Spender in his "Life, Politics and Journalism" tells the story of how Jowett once told him that journalism was a good-for-nothing profession and illustrated his statement with an anecdote. It would appear that the editor of London paper requested the Master of Balliol to recommend a good leader writer. Jowett complied with the request. The editor did not find the young man satisfactory and specified the qualifications in greater

detail: he must be able to right sense flamboyantly. Jewett thought this a tall order, and told the editor so. Merciful oblivion shrouds the name of that editor. But it is worth retailing the story lately given currency to about Delane having several gifted men as writers of leading articles, crouching tigers, as Kinglake called them. "They were kept in leash," adds "Kim" in the *Statesman*, "for the greater part of the day, but as the afternoon drew on Delane would summon them into an inner room. They came, alert and expectant, and Delane would tell them at whom or at what they had to spring. Next morning the public would gaze at the mangled remains of the reputation of a famous politician."

This is characteristic of the way in which nineteenth century journalists went about their business. The editorial "we" and polysyllabic discourses were meant to impress the ignorant and add weight to the dignity of the profession. Sesquipedalian pedantry was the rule, lucidity and clarity the exception. Not only did the newspapers fail to touch the life of the masses except at a few points, but even the little slice of life they made their own was wrapped up in wordy obscurities and made to seem an abstruse speculation. Macaulay points out that Dr. Johnson habitually translated his thoughts into

Johnsonese when putting pen to paper. The leader-writers of the last century generally translated their thoughts into a conventional "journalese" as ridiculous in its way as the poetic diction of the previous century. O. Henry pokes fun at this in a little-read story of his. A war-correspondent, forced to devise ways and means of evading the censor, who wanted to spread false news, cables something which nobody in his office could make out. It looks like a piece of harmless lunacy, and makes no sense whatsoever. But a bright young man solves the conundrum. The dignified phraseology and elegant variations of this new dialect had set up inevitable associations, so that every one could call to mind phrases made up of inseparable twins. The clever correspondent used in his cable the harmless, meaningless factors from these twins and relied on his office to interpret every senseless word by its significant twin.

The heavy style of leading articles of those days is sufficiently illustrated by the following quotations from the comments of the *Times* on the libel case filed by Dr. Achilli against Cardinal Newman: "Has the lapse of 170 years entirely removed us from those narrow prejudices and cruel partialities which in the days of the Popish Plot poisoned the pure

foundation of justice and affixed an indelible stigma on the character of a nation not habitually unfair or inhuman?.....Now stopped in a procession at Naples by a clamorous mother, now dogged at Corfu by a jealous tailor, now solemnly remonstrated with by members of his congregation on account of his maid-servant, he (Dr. Achilli) is the most unfortunate of men if all these charges have been trumped up without substantial foundation.

“We wish we could conclude our observations on this case without saying anything calculated to imply a censure on the jury or the judge, under whose auspices they have, it seems to us, so signally miscarried. From the time one of them objected to the exclusion of Dr. Achilli from the court, and another to the searching and reasonable question as to his general chastity, which he did not find it expedient to answer, till the faltering announcement, preceded and followed by unchecked applause, that the justification was not proved to their satisfaction, there is every reason to think that the case was not viewed by the jury with complete impartiality and absence of sectarian feeling.

“We have every respect for the high judicial character and attainments of Lord Campbell, and it is, therefore, with great regret we find him, in a case of so much delicacy and

excitement 'thanking God' that 'we have no inquisition in this country'; and after he had been sufficiently applauded, renewing the remark that he might be applauded again, and assuring the audience with grotesque solemnity, that by admitting this document (a copy of the proceedings of the Inquisition against Dr. Achilli) he did so without the slightest degree of danger to the Protestant religion of this country—a discovery which was received by the audience with a round of cheers. We now take leave of this painful subject, trusting we may not soon again be called upon to comment on proceedings so indecorous in their nature, so unsatisfactory in their result—so little calculated to increase the respect of the people for the administration of justice, or the estimation by foreign nations of the English name and character."* The leader is exceptionally well-written and says just the thing that ought to be said. But to-day the same article would be written differently.

Or take again Townsend, whom his successor in the *Spectator*, Mr. St. Leo Strachey, a great authority on the art of writing English, once styled "the greatest leader-writer England has ever seen." Townsend has particular claim on our regard; for, as has been said of him by

* *More Invective*, edited by Hugh Kingsmill.

one who worked under him for a space and became later distinguished in the wider field of affairs *, he had made his paper, *The Friend of India*, "the most interesting and powerful factor in very troubled times in the Anglo-Indian Press." He has been described for us by the same competent hand as "possessed of a courtly Anglo-Indian air, tapping his snuff-box, and walking up and down his room, emitting dogmatic paradoxes." He, in partnership with Richard Holt Hutton, "looking out on external things through a monocle with an extra powerful lens, and talking with the almost languid, donnish air of one who had in old days breakfasted with Crabbe Robinson and sat at the feet of Arthur Clough," showed a high ideal of journalism and never lacked courage. Here is a sample from Townsend's early days. Describing the Government of India, he wrote in the Calcutta newspaper: "It is a thing which exists and is alive, but cannot be accounted for by any process of reasoning founded on experience. It is a miracle as a floating island of granite would be a miracle, or a bird of brass which flew and sang and lived in mid-air. It is a structure built on nothing, without foundations, without buttresses, held in its place by some force, the origin of which is undiscoverable

* Lord Oxford and Asquith: *Memories and Reflections*.

and the nature of which has never been explained." This was written in 1858; and "Kim" to whom we are indebted for the extract adds for himself that "it is as true to-day as it was then." But there are few writers who have put it in that simple but arresting manner. Morely quotes in his *Life of Gladstone* a passage from Townsend's later style in the *Spectator* of October 29, 1864, summing up in admirable language what was then coming to be known as Mr. Gladstone's policy.

It is therefore no wonder that Fleet Street, with traditions and examples of this kind, in its cloistered seclusion, would not recognise Newnes and Harmsworth as the pioneers of a new age. They were in truth unworthy the notice of the highbrows. And after all they were busy with weeklies and pandered to the lower classes, while what really mattered, of course, were the great morning newspapers, catering to a discriminating ruling class. But even in this guarded field, there was a vague uneasiness. Old traditions were being upset. Mathew Arnold saw the change coming, and wrote about it in an article on the "New Journalism" as early as 1887. "It is full of ability, novelty, variety, sensation, sympathy, generous instincts," he admitted; "but its one fault is that it is feather-brained. It throws out assertions at a venture,

because it wishes them to be true, does not correct them or itself if they are false, and to get at the state of things as they really are it seems to feel no concern whatever.”*

If this uneasy stirring of the calm, pellucid waters of the old journalism can be attributed to any single person, we might say that it was due to a young man who was often seen running across the Pall Mall during the early eighties. He was an assistant editor in the *Pall Mall Gazette*; and when his chief, the austere John Morley, heard that his assistant used to run, his severe features became severer still. W. T. Stead, even when he was editing a provincial paper, brought himself to the notice of kings, emperors, politicians of half the world with whom he regularly carried on correspondence. He had the gift of showmanship, and paved the way for the revolution which was to be associated with the name of Lord Northcliffe. Morley, though of a fundamentally different temperament, pays him a well-turned compliment in his “Recollections”: Stead was “for a season the most powerful journalist in the island—invaluable, abounding in journalistic resource, eager in conviction, infinitely bold, candid, laborious in sure-footed mastery of all the facts, and bright with a geniality and cheer-

* Quoted by Herd; *Making of Modern Journalism*.

fulness that no difference between us and none of the passing embarrassments of the day could for a moment damp. His extraordinary vigour and spirit made other people seem wet blankets, creatures of moral defaillance."

Before dealing with Stead's influence on the New Journalism, it may be well to deal here with another figure of those days, who had a varied and amazing career. Asquith has referred to the partnership between Hutton and Townsend as somewhat of a rare character in the history of British journalism. He quotes the classical case of Delane and Leonard Courtney to show that "the profession of journalism seems to establish a conventional harmony between the strangest of bed-fellows." The partnership of Stead and Milner (in the *Pall Mall Gazette*) was not less remarkable in this aspect of it than that of Stead and Morley. Of Milner, Stead said at one time: "He (Milner) would squirm at an adjective here, reduce a superlative there, and generally strike out anything that seemed calculated needlessly to irritate or offend. He was always putting water into my wine. He was always combing out the knots in the tangled mane of the P. M. G., and when the lion opened his mouth, Milner was always at hand to be consulted as to the advisability of modulating the ferocity of its roar His

task was most useful, but when he pruned he sometimes cut to the quick, and the victim smarted while his offspring bled." And no wonder. Milner had "a refined and fastidious mind, great literary culture, and a sense of taste which must frequently have been offended by his editor's vagaries." Yet, as Lord Oxford says, it was Stead who left the stamp of his individuality on the paper, and made it a live and influential organ.

"A compound of Don Quixote and Phineas T. Barnum"—such was Lord Milner's own epigram on Stead. And it is true in this sense that it draws attention to Stead's idealism and journalistic acumen. Frequently described as the King of Stunts, he first showed the stolid British public how a campaign was to be carried on in the press. The make-up of his paper was neither daring nor original; though he introduced "interviews"—first employed as a vehicle of news by the *New York Herald* in 1859—as a regular feature into respectable journalism and it had become a settled institution. Stead had a way of saying things that stuck in people's minds and his "Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon," a series of articles on what to-day will be called the white slave traffic of which the first appeared on July 10, 1885, made journalistic history. It was a "stunner" of the

first magnitude, and it electrified the whole of England. Within a few days Parliament passed the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, whose passage, indeed, it was intended to help. And then there came as the aftermath of his agitation one of those curious comedies in which the Law is wont to provoke the laughter and the derision of the wise. It was no part of its duty to feel sorry for the grievous scandal which Stead had exposed. But he had omitted a trivial precaution, which rendered him technically guilty of abduction. And the ponderous machinery of the law found Stead guilty and sent him to jail for three months. Still, it was Stead's greatest achievement. Almost equally effective were his agitations for improving the London poor and demanding the despatch of Gordon to the Soudan. "The Truth about the Navy" campaign was yet another experiment in moulding mass-opinion, and to it might be added Stead's powerful plea for referring the Penjdeh dispute to arbitration.

Stead played Phillip to Northcliffe's Alexander. But though he lived till 1912 he remained a pioneer and no more. He did not follow up the changes he had innovated to their logical conclusion, and left the task to others who were not writers primarily or even secondarily, but were first and last news-

gatherers and organisers. In the early nineties O'Connor started the *Star*, with a galaxy of subversive talents on its staff of critics, and shadowed forth the new epoch. He again could not work it up. And there was more than humour in his statement three decades later, when, laying the foundation-stone of the new *Star* building, he said that he was making blunders throughout his life, and that the greatest of them was to have sold the *Star*. After *Answers* became a money-maker, Harmsworth was looking for an opportunity to invade the field of daily journalism. With the help of Kennedy Jones, he bought the *Evening News* and placed it on the map. And finally Harmsworth set up his tabernacle in the secluded and fenced-off camp of morning journalism with his *Daily Mail*.

In the year 1890 advertisements announced "A Surprise. Daily Mail." After weeks of busy activity Alfred Harmsworth brought forth his new morning paper, and proclaimed with a flourish of trumpets his entry into the *sanctum sanctorum*. With a subtle insight into the minds of the people, Harmsworth saw to it that his paper differed from the rest not in a glaring way but in its suggestion of atmosphere. In the front page, the *Daily Mail* was described as a busy man's paper, and as a penny newspaper for half-penny. The front page

was decorous with advertisements, and the head-lines were far from daring. But all through there was vivacity, life and compression. "The motto of the new press," says Mr. Ockham, "was Brightness, Brevity, Enterprise and Cheapness." Every column had its heading, paragraphing was easier, and the writers were asked to write in a way which would not be above the meanest understanding. Leading articles were short and to the point. Slowly the idea of news-value gathered force and the world of journalism abandoned its age-old standard of values by which "the fall of a cabinet in Patagonia was of more interest to the reader than a murder on his door-step."

In the first leading article of the *Daily Mail* it was pointed out that it was the first attempt to issue all the news of the morning at a half-penny. "But," the article went on, "the note of the Daily Mail is not so much economy of price as compactness and conciseness. It is essentially a busy man's paper.....It is no secret that remarkable new inventions have just come to the help of the Press. Our type is set by machinery, we can produce 200,000 papers per hour, cut, folded and if necessary with the pages pasted together. Our stereotyping arrangements, engines and machines are of the latest English and American construction, and

it is the use of these inventions on a scale unprecedented in any English newspaper office that enables the Daily Mail to effect a saving of from 30 to 50% and to be sold at half the price of its contemporaries." *

What was the nature of the revolution which Harmsworth effected in daily journalism? Not merely brightness and readability: there was real transformation of values. The tastes of the reading public were meticulously gone into; and strenuous attempts made to satisfy them. Hence Lord Salisbury's famous sneer about the "Daily Mail" being a newspaper written by office-boys for office-boys. Hence too Northcliffe's ideal of a daily talking-point. This idea cut clean through all tradition. "For while to-day the talking-point may be a speech by Lord Rosebury, the new Liberal Premier, to-morrow it may be the Derby or the Ascot, or a divorce case, or a murder trial, or a fresh attempt to reach the North Pole, or the discovery of a cure for some disease, or a Royal procession or rumour of a war." It might in fact be anything. The business of the journalist, according to the star actor on that stage, was to see which way the popular wind was blowing and run along with it until there was a change of direction.

* Macnair Wilson : *Lord Northcliffe*.

A particularly competent writer has laid bare the psychology of the talking-point and the stunt which follows it. "Day differs from day in respect of the public events they bring forth," says this authority. "On one day some years ago, there died both the heir-apparent to the British Throne and the most famous British ecclesiastic of the time. On many other days there really is no public news of much moment. No doubt, we ought, in a high moral sense, to see importance in everything. Amen, but still, humanly speaking, there are days rich in salient news and days far from rich in it. What then shall the journalist do on the day poor in news? Accept and indicate the fact that history does sometimes sing small? Frankly say, as it were, to his readers: No big news today. Still, there's what there is, for whatever it's worth? Or try to work up the illusion that the dull yesterday, which he has to report, was really a very remarkable and sensational day? Fasten on one of the trivial affairs that took place and cry it up, feature it and boom it as an event that is shaking, or will shake, the globe and firmament? Both courses are followed by various English journals. But most of them follow the second."* And at this point we are only interested in showing that it was Harmsworth who first and

* C. E. Montague: *A Writer's Notes on His Trade*.

deliberately set out to cater to the appetite of the board-school-educated masses, and compelled others to follow on. Statement, over-statement and understatement are alike useful and have their place as modes of expression. But the "talking-point" or the stunt, with its carnival of exaggeration and extravagance, as it has been aptly styled, was a Northcliffean contribution to the New Journalism. On days when news is slack and the world seems to move with leaden feet, those who look to their daily newspaper for a feast for their jaded nerves have to be provided with their thrills. And then we have the exhibition of that uncanny insight into the dismal tastes of the populace.

For some time, for instance, Northcliffe kept the public excited by his standard bread stunt. A little more costly was his campaign against the soap manufacturers; but it served its purpose by stimulating the interest of the people in the subject, and indirectly in the *Daily Mail*. Mr. Tom Clarke, in his "My Northcliffe Diary," gives a vivid account of the origin and progress of what may be called the Road Hog stunt, which is characteristic. The improved window-dressing of news was also due to Northcliffe. He knew the value of headlines and the significance of the makeup. In his apprenticeship to the Tenth Muse,

he had learnt the art of catching the reader's eye. Then again were reporters taught anew their work. No longer could they remain mere shorthand experts, reproducing column after column of unreadable speeches. They had to develop a nose for news, and join the chase. The Chief himself was an expert at the game. An illustration is sufficient. One day while walking along the street, he noticed a number of people wearing silk hats at Hampstead. He rang up the office and asked them to investigate. Some minutes later he told them all about it. It was the Jewish New Year, and they were all wearing their best and going to the synagogue. There was a good story, and it went under the heading: "Many Tall Hats at Hampstead." This was an object-lesson for all news-hunters. Yet again, the reports should never be written chronologically; but whatever happened to be the most important and arresting item, the report must open with it. A writer on *Free-lance Journalism* has illustrated the difference between the old and new journalism in a striking fashion. Suppose an one-legged watchman rescues a child from falling into a river. The old method of reporting would go on something like this: the child was playing, it slipped and fell into the river; the watchman saw it

and saved the child. The rescue was noteworthy because the man had a wooden leg. The New Reporter would set about his task in a different manner altogether. He would probably begin his account by saying that, despite the handicap of his wooden leg, X. Y., the watchman, rescued a child from being drowned in a river; and then would follow the other details, including possibly pictures of the child, the watchman and the parents of the former.

The new Press insisted on the human touch. The readers did not like to read of wooden reports; they wanted to feel the reality. "Do not write about the Judge," Northcliffe admonished, "when reporting a law case. Speak of the Judge by name. Let your readers realise that he is a living man and not a legal term." This was an excellent change for the better; only it sometimes went beyond the limits of good taste. To photograph the weeping widow of a miner struck down in a colliery accident, or to get the opinion of the wife of a condemned murderer on the justice of the sentence passed is an example of the extent to which a perfectly healthy development can be carried. On the whole, however, the Press has gained by this tendency to publish live reports of events instead of the old-fashioned rigmaroles that

buried their meaning in a mass of superfluous verbiage.

For a time Fleet Street looked askance at Northcliffe's methods of drawing popular attention. But they never thought they would one day have to imitate those methods if they were to survive in the race for living. Wickham Steed has said: "When Harmsworth founded his *Daily Mail* and sold it at a half-penny, I doubt whether a dozen men in Fleet Street foresaw the revolution which was beginning." And the revolution was fairly complete, and on the high way to respectability when Northcliffe bought the *Times*. As early as 1900, Harmsworth was anxious to buy the *Times*. R. D. Blumenfeld records in his Diary under date October 16, 1900, that Harmsworth asked him to make an offer to the proprietors of the *Times* going up to a million pounds in Consols. R. D. B., carried out his mission, but the Walters refused to sell. Eight years later he got it, and announced himself as the Napoleon of the Press. Northcliffe arrested the decline of the greatest paper in England and gave it a new lease of life. It had woefully failed to keep itself abreast of the times. The home news service was inadequate, and the paper was printed in two sections, one containing recent news, and the other dealing with news not so

recent. Northcliffe once remarked apropos this policy: "The *Times* thinks that news like wine improved by keeping." There was no regularity in the make-up and the readers found the greatest difficulty in looking for the news that interested them. Complainants were referred to the index. All this was slowly changed, and in the hands of Northcliffe the paper without losing its respectability and without sinning against the great traditions it stood for, became bright and looked alive.

In a way his invasion of Printing House Square may be regarded as the crown of Northcliffe's achievement. He had brought about a revolution, and made it respectable. Nothing in the world of journalism could hereafter be as it was before Northcliffe. There was a parallel and perhaps earlier development in America; but the revolution in England was mainly the work of Northcliffe and there was nothing inevitable about it. Mr. Herd in his introduction to the "Making of Modern Journalism" points out "a vital distinction between the respective methods of the two countries. Here (in England) the keynote is compactness: there size is worshipped in newspapers as in other things. It is one of the paradoxes of the United States that a people who adore bustle endure bulky journals which, if properly

digested, would leave no time for the day's work. Forty-page daily newspapers are common and Sunday editions run to over 100 pages, the largest example I have seen containing 178 . . . In one respect we have been influenced by American journalism, and that is in exploiting the human interest in the news, though the limits of good taste are more rigidly drawn here than over there. Head-lines which are of such importance in the popular presentation of news have developed quite differently in the two countries. Ours give the main facts at a glance; theirs are often an extended summary of the News." All the motives and methods of the New Journalism which Northcliffe created more than any other man are critically, even unkindly, described by Mr. Alderton Pink in his "A Realist Looks at Democracy."

Newnes, Pearson and Harmsworth in England, and Pulitzer and Hearst in the United States of America discovered and catered to the tastes of a Demos, recently taught to appreciate the beauties of the three R's; and the result was the New Journalism, as at the time it was called, though to-day it threatens almost to become a respectable old journalism. It is a free and untrammelled country, Journalism. The student who is on the threshold may choose whomsoever he may for model. Mr. R. Macnair

Wilson, from whose fulsome and adulatory volume on "Lord Northcliffe" we have quoted, presents in his best Corinthian style a figure of his hero, of which Henry W. Nevinson was moved to say that he did not know what more could be said of the Archangels Gabriel, Michael and Raphael combined. We must not, however, forget that other men have similarly been overcome by the magnetism of Lord Northcliffe's personality, and hailed him as the giant of their days. Northcliffe did not bestride his world like a Colossus. There was in this epoch a great and good and glorious figure in Charles Prestwich Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*; and the reader who turns to the appendix has an opportunity of judging for himself not only the shortcomings of the Northcliffian standard but of deciding for himself on whom he will model his young style.

CHAPTER IV

EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN PRESS *

Alike the American and the Indian Press are the offspring of the British newspaper. Both began towards the end of the 18th century as reprints from British journals. But thereafter they pursued diametrically opposite courses. While the American Press, freed by the War of Independence from British tastes and British political predominance, outstripped its parent in its zeal for popular approval at all costs, the Indian Press for long catered only to the ruling race in India anxious for "home" news; and when Indians ventured into journa-

* The history of the Indian Press is still virgin field for the plough of research. Pat Lovett's lectures deal fairly fully with post-Congress developments. For the earlier period, one must refer to Sanyal's articles in the *Calcutta Review* a score of years back (1907 to 1912), and also to Prof. C. S. Srinivasachari's admirable summary of a century and a half of development in the Golden Jubilee Souvenir number of the *Hindu* Madras, dated October 7, 1928. For the rest, one must consult various books on Indian history and scattered magazine articles. It is a pity that no one has thought of collecting them all and issuing the information in handy book form. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, that repository of all wisdom, evidently thinks it *infra dig* to refer to any newspaper in India not owned by the members of the ruling race.

lism they had to meet the subtle and masterful opposition of the bureaucracy. Since the beginning it has always been a contest, open or veiled, between the Civil Service and the Press—a see-saw struggle, inclining now in favour of reaction and now in favour of liberty of thought. To-day, in the broad daylight of the twentieth century, the contest has veered round in favour of the Executive, which has armed itself with the most extraordinary pieces of legislation in the whole history of the suppression of thought, under the plausible pretext of overcoming a movement subversive of law and order, and indeed of the very bases of ordered society.

This does not mean that in the pre-British days India had known no precursors to the modern newspaper. We have had occasion to refer to Asoka's inscriptions and the records of the departments of intelligence set up by ancient rulers. Under the Moghuls, the spy blossomed into the reporter, and the "wackane-gaur" became a regular department of State. It supplied the Court at regular intervals with news, complaints and the like in the form of "Bawcquas," or news-letters, written regularly by *Wacqua navis* or news writers in the service of the State. News books were kept at all important government centres. The State Intelli-

gencer was a powerful functionary. The English factory at Hugly frequently availed themselves of these news-books to bring their grievances before the Moghul Court. On the 28th April and the 5th May, 1715, certain remarkable entries, recording the complaints of English merchants about customs exactions, are to be found in the New Book at Hugly. The earliest mention of a manuscript newspaper is found in the pages of the Moslem historian, Khafi Khan, who mentions that the news of the death of Raja Ram of the house of Sivaji was brought to the Imperial camp by newspapers. The soldiers of Aurangzebe read manuscript journals. It is said that during the reign of the last great scion of the dynasty of Babar, the leader-writers of those pre-typographic newspapers enjoyed considerable liberty. A Bengal paper commented rather severely on the Emperor's relations with his grandson, and yet was not visited with the Royal displeasure. India in the 18th century produced two famous journalists, Aim-ul-Omrah, minister of Asaf Jah, and Mirza Ali Beg, the Imperial gazetteer. Even after the introduction of printing, these news sheets continued to enjoy public patronage, and were often used by the early Anglo-Indian Press for getting authentic news. For instance, under date April 22, 1813, the *Calcutta*

Gazette confirms the news of Ranjit Singh's occupation of Attock. Notwithstanding all this, it is clear that the Press in its modern form in India was a concomitant of English rule. And Pat Lovett was right when he said: "Journalism in India derives from journalism in England, and in spite of faults and shortcomings is a credit to the parent stock. *Patris est filius*, more especially in maintaining the most cherished English tradition that it is the duty of a political journalist to publish his opinions even at the risk of fine and imprisonment: there is also another strong family resemblance in making the leading article a potent weapon in shaping public opinion." These two sentences admirably sum up the spirit and history of the Indian Press.

St. Francis Xavier was the first to introduce printing in India, * and the first book to be printed was the Catechism of Doctrine. It is

* This probably refers to printing in English. For, it is stated by S. C. Sanyal in the *Hindustan Review* for June, 1907, that Sir Charles Wilkins, the famous Sanskritist and Orientalist "was the father of Indian typography. When he commenced the study of Eastern languages, the means of printing in any oriental character did not exist. He determined to create them. He could not have been much beyond the age of twenty-five when he set to work; and with his own hands fabricated the first fount of types in the Bengalee character; and it was with these types that Halhead's Bengalee Grammar was printed at Hooghly in 1778."

somewhat two centuries later in the time of Warren Hastings that the first Indian periodical was printed in Calcutta. About the year 1767 one Mr. Bolt offered through a notice in front of his house every encouragement to those who might wish to engage in printing and also invited the public to come and read or transcribe such news of public interest as he came in possession of. But it is to James Augustus Hicky* that we must assign the credit of being the pioneer of the Press in India. He started in 1780 the *Bengal Gazette*—a weekly political and commercial paper, open to all parties, but influenced by none. It affected the violent political, polemical tone so common in the 18th century; and, secure in the freedom of the Press, specialised in the scandals of the day, social and political, under the thin disguise of fictitious race-meetings, imaginary law-cases and so on. The most notorious of his performances from the view-point of later history was a “Play-bill Extraordinary,” advertising a non-existing play of the name of “Tyranny in Full Bloom,” in which Hastings and Impey were mercilessly satirised. The tyrant of course was Hastings, and the part of Judge Jeffreys was given to Impey. The Rev. William Johnson

* For an interesting account of the rise and fall of the first newspaper in India, see Busteed: *Echoes from Old Calcutta*.

figured as Judas Iscariot touching the forty pieces of silver. The Grand Jury was described as "slaves, train-bearers, toad-eaters and syco-phants," a description at least partially warranted by the execution of Nuncomar. The social columns were equally teeming with abuse. Listen to this account of Admiral Sir Edward Hughes, whom Hicky always styled as "Sir Edward Durbar" : "He is a short, thick-set, fat man; his skin fits remarkably tight about him: has very rosy gills, and drivels a little at the mouth from the constant use of quids." Hicky did not neglect the worship of the Muses. It is possible that the paper received some countenance from the party of Phillip Francis, as the latter escapes the almost universal censure. So far as Hastings was concerned, the last straw was reached when Hicky published a scurrilous screed on Mrs. Hastings. In November 1780, its circulation through the General Post Office was stopped, with the object of depriving Hicky of out-station subscribers: but he circumvented the Government by hiring a number of persons to do the work formerly entrusted to the post office. In June 1781, at the suit of Hastings, Hicky was fined and imprisoned: the Gazette continued and Hicky was again fined.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the number of periodicals had vastly increased.

Calcutta had a number of weeklies and monthlies. Madras followed suit quickly. Under the patronage of Sir Archibald Campbell, Governor, the *Madras Courier* started on its career. Official notices used to be posted at the gates of Fort St. George for public information. The 'Courier' undertook the duty of broadcasting them: in return, the government allowed the paper to circulate free of charge in the Presidency. The Bombay Government soon desired that the paper should be sent to them regularly. Boyd, the fortunate editor, soon started a second periodical, the *Hircarrah*, (1793), which also enjoyed the same privileges as the 'Courier.' Yet another officially patronised paper was the *Madras Gazette*, which had the distinction of printing for the first time advertisements in the Tamil language. Those were halcyon days for the Madras Press: but, as we shall see, Nemesis was lurking round the corner. The western presidency started the *Bombay Herald* in 1789. Two years later the *Bombay Gazette* was founded, but it was in 1792 amalgamated with the 'Herald.'

What was the tone and temper of these "primitives" of the Press? Most of them were content to reproduce voluminous extracts from the British Press. The English mail was due about once a month; and the editor's duty was

to make the bundle of newspapers from "home" last till the next contingent arrived. During the monsoon months, with the ships refusing to brave the wrath of the seas, the supply would often run dry. To this was superadded some stray news and notes, which served to give a thin local colour. "In the Indian Gazette of 1792 we have a strange medley of news: they range from the Paris commotions that heralded the French Revolution and the trial of the Birmingham rioters to Lord Cornwallis' despatches announcing the taking of Bangalore and the advance on Seringapatam." Often there would be Parliamentary proceedings reported six months after date! One of the Madras papers enjoyed something of a literary reputation.* The editor could quote Byron, when the poet was the latest sensation. Of the 'Madras Courier,' Prof. Srinivasachariar says: Each issue consisted of four pages, the first two of which were devoted to extracts from English papers, the third was occupied by letters to the editor and Indian news, and the last was full of advertisements and poetry. As can easily be seen these newspapers were essentially intended for birds of passage, who were eager to know

* It is worthy of note that even then it was remarked that a Madras newspaper in order to please must be wise in moral essays, Johnsonian in style. The style apparently still persists.

all about the home they had left behind. They are the direct ancestors of what is called the Anglo-Indian Press in India, which always and naturally refers to England as the home.*

The second decade of the nineteenth century was a period of great intellectual ferment in Bengal. The impact of western culture was producing its first fruits. Ram Mohan Roy was coming to the fore. Discussion was proceeding as to the best type of education for Indians. The question of religious and social reform and the question of education were of paramount interest, and periodicals were started in Indian languages. The *Samachar Darpan* began its career at Serampore in 1818 as a missionary organ, with the good wishes of Lord Hastings, the Governor-General. It was charged but a fourth of the usual postal rate. Roy followed with his *Brahmanical Magazine*. Hindu orthodoxy bestirred itself and came forward with a champion having the poetic name of *Chandrika*. The founder of the Brahmo Samaj scented reaction here, and countered it with his *Kaumudi*. So the struggle went on, and the Press increased in prestige and influence. Vernacular journalism, however, seems to have first made itself

* By the way, some Indian newspapers even to-day publish news of "homeward bound" steamers, meaning of course ships sailing to England.

the Bombay Presidency ; and the credit
 ding in this field is claimed for Bombay.

. P. Karkaria, who published in 1896 a
 sketch of the life and times of Malabari, ob-
 serves that "the first newspaper in the country
 was started more than a century ago in Calcutta
 by an Englishman, and for a long time the
 press was in the hands of English writers alone,
 who were unconnected with the official class,
 and who distinguished themselves by freely
 criticising the policy of the Government. . . .
 Even before the liberty of the Press was grant-
 ed, by which a great stimulus was given to
 public journalism in this country, vernacular
 papers were started by educated natives, who
 conducted them, of course, in a tentative, timid
 manner. The first vernacular paper came into
 existence, nearly eighty years ago, in Bombay,
 which has thus had the honour of showing the
 way to the rest of India." * Side by side
 with this, in itself a development of vast conse-
 quence, the English periodicals went on increas-
 ing in numbers. Other parts of India began to
 emulate Calcutta and Madras. The *Cantonment*
Advertiser was started in 1822. Meerut began
 a journal in manuscript, *later* the *Marble* of
 the Italian Gazettes, one presumes, and *the*

* The reference is to the *Dewan Samachar*, a Gujarati
 paper founded in 1822 and still continuing publication.

its efforts with a printed *Observer* in 1831. The 'Observer' yielded place to the *Mofussilite* which was issued from the Agra Fort during the troublous days of the Mutiny. Later it was absorbed by the *Civil and Military Gazette*, which was originally a weekly at Simla before it became a daily at Lahore. In the thirties, there were, beside, the *Agra Akbar*, a Persian journal, the *Delhi Gazette*, and Dr. Buist's *Bombay Times*, the parent of the modern *Times of India*.

By an act of the 15th September 1835, Lord Metcalfe, the acting Governor-General of India, emancipated the Indian Press. We may here glance briefly at the position of the Indian Press *vis-a-vis* the Government during the half-century of its existence before this great charter was granted. Law in India, when Calcutta sprouted with periodicals, did not envisage Press offences. Beyond the provisions for libel, there were no special clauses directed against the Press, which was left free to print anything, always with the proviso that the law could take action afterwards. This in effect is what the doctrine of the Freedom of the Press means. It is not a license to print anything and everything, to publish libels, to promote sedition, to foment class and communal hatred and so forth. That kind of freedom no Press has

ever had, nor could ever be permitted to have. It is merely, on the other hand, freedom to print news and comments, subject to the consequences of the law. But a vigilant executive need never be in fear that it has not all the armoury of repression at hand. They easily found a point of attack : a special permit was necessary in those days to enable a British citizen to reside within the Company's territories : and this provided the executive with a handy weapon in deportation. Cornwallis began the game, and Wellesley followed in his footsteps. The latter went a step further and forged fetters for the Press. He established a Press Censorship, passed stringent regulations for the guidance of editors and punished their violation by deportation of the offender. It was one of the duties of the Chief Secretary in those days to pass the newspapers for publication. * One can imagine the mouths of many at the present day watering at the mention of this great privilege which the ad-

* The regulations were cordially approved by the Court of Directors, but the Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control, reserved for further consideration the despatch welcoming the gagging of the press. It is interesting to note that Wellesley requested the exclusion of his despatch on the Press when his official despatches were later collected and published : he was perhaps ashamed of it. Wellesley also mooted the proposal for a Government newspaper, an idea since revived often ; but the scheme was given up on account of the financial commitments involved.

vance of public opinion has placed for ever beyond the Government's reach. As we shall see, since the days of Metcalfe, the sole aim of the Service has been somehow or other to gain this power and place the Press beyond the reach of judicial supervision. And the elaborate ordinance of to-day with its confiscatory provisions is one of the most effective substitutes for what every administrator has hankered after. But there was in those days a strong Liberal group in England, who were not prepared to countenance autocracy anywhere within the British territories. Some of the pro-consuls who came to India were also imbued with this spirit and refused to yield to the pressure of the men on the spot. It was the accident of the presence of men of this fibre in the early days in India that gave the country a free press for four score years. Wellesley's policy was followed by Minto, who extended the censorship even to religious publications; but Hastings, who came next, struck a different tune. This was partly due to a practical difficulty. For, the deportation law could apply only to those who were not born in India. About this time some papers came to be edited by Indian-born subjects of the Company, and the grotesque posture of the law was sought to be amended by Hastings. He abolished the censorship, and at least gilded the

iron fetters of the Press. He issued the following regulation: "The editors of newspapers are prohibited from publishing any matter coming under the following heads:

1. Animadversions on the measures and proceedings of the honourable the Court of Directors or other public authorities in England connected with the Government of India; or disquisitions on the political transactions of the local administration; or offensive remarks levelled at the public conduct of the members of the council, of the judges of the Supreme Court, or the Lord Bishop of Calcutta.

2. Discussions having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the native population of any intended interference with their religious opinions.

3. The republication from English or other newspapers of passages coming under any of the above heads, or otherwise calculated to affect the British power or reputation in India.

4. Private scandal and personal remarks on individuals tending to excite dissension in society.

These regulations merely sugared the bitter pill. As Sir John Campbell states: "By this measure the name of an invidious office was abolished and the responsibility of printing offensive matter was removed from a public

functionary to the author or editor : but this change, so far from rescinding any of the restrictions on the Press, in reality imposed them in as strong, if not a stronger, degree than any measure that had before been adopted.”* Even so, the Court of Directors were alarmed, and passed a resolution directing the restoration of the old enactment. Here again the Board of Control intervened and stopped the despatch.

But the Marquis of Hastings thought differently from Sir John. In reply to an address from the citizens of Madras, he declared: “My removal of the restrictions from the Press has been mentioned in laudatory terms..... I know myself to have been guided in the step by a positive and well-weighed policy. If our motives of action are worthy, it must be wise to render them intelligible throughout our Empire, our hold on which is opinion. Further, it is salutary for supreme authority, even when its intentions are most pure, to look to the control of public scrutiny : while conscious of rectitude the authority can lose nothing by exposure to general comment. On the contrary it acquires incalculable addition of force. The government, which has nothing to disguise, wields the most powerful instrument that can attain to sovereign rule. It carries with it the united reliance and

* *Political India.*

effort of the whole mass of the governed.”* However stringent the regulations were, Lord Hastings allowed them to remain a dead letter.

About this time the “Calcutta Gazette” and the “Indian Gazette” began to publish outspoken comments on the doings of government. Mr. Adam, political secretary to the Governor-General, did not like in particular the editor of the former, John Silk Buckingham, who received a number of warnings. With the retirement of Hastings, Mr. Adam rose to the position of acting Governor-General and forthwith began to indulge his pet grudge against the Press. Without venturing to re-establish the censorship, he obliged every printer to obtain a license before printing a newspaper. And he had Buckingham deported to England for quite a trivial offence: the Calcutta Journal had ventured to ridicule the appointment of a Scotch minister to the position of clerk to the Committee of Stationery. “The eminently learned Dr. Bryce, the head minister of the new Scotch church, having accepted the situation of clerk of the stationery belonging to the Hon’ble Company,” says the ‘Murat-el-Akbar.’ Ram Mohan Roy’s Persian newspaper, “Mr. Buckingham, editor of the (Calcutta) Journal, observed

* Quoted by Beveridge: *Comprehensive History of India*. Also Sanyal.

directly as well as indirectly that it was unbecoming of the character of a minister to accept a situation like this: upon which the Governor-General, in consideration of his disrespectful expression, passed an order that Buckingham should leave India within two months from the date of receipt of the same, and that after the expiration of that period he is not allowed to remain a single day in India.”* To Mr. Adam, this was the climax to a series of impertinent insults. The Calcutta Journal, for instance, had dared to suggest that a certain Governor of Madras was not wanted there. Another time Buckingham was prosecuted by some Government officials for libel, but he was acquitted. Mr. Adams no doubt finally had him deported; but Buckingham did not accept his fate with anything like resignation. He became a running sore in the flesh of the Company, and after much fruitless effort forced a select committee of the House of Commons to recommend redress eleven years after his deportation. A good while was to pass before the Company granted him a pension of £200 a year. To crown his revenge he returned to India after Metcalfe had liberated the Press. But before then the Journal was suppressed; and Mr. Arnot, its

* Quoted by R. G. Pradhan in his *Freedom of the Press in India*.

editor in succession to Buckingham, was arrested and put on board a home-going ship. The radicalism of Buckingham provoked a syndicate of British merchants to start the "John Bull in the East," in 1820 to support the Government and inculcate Tory principles. Its columns, writes Sir Alfred Watson, were as dull as those of Buckingham were lively, but under Stocqueler, who changed its name to the "Englishman," it became the most powerful British newspaper in India.

Shortly after the expulsion of Buckingham, Adam issued a rigorous Press ordinance, which prescribed that no one should publish a newspaper or periodical without having obtained a license from the Governor-General-in-Council, signed by the Chief Secretary. Before this regulation could come into force, the law required it to be fixed up in the Supreme Court for twenty days, and then, if not disallowed, registered. Foremost among the objectors was Ram Mohan Roy. He drew up a memorial and sent it to the Government, and also presented one through counsel to the Supreme-Court. Sir Francis Macnaughten, the presiding judge, gave his decision in favour of the ordinance. Ram Mohan Roy then appealed to the King-in-Council, though here again his efforts were unavailing, and the Privy Council refused to interfere

in the matter. It is interesting in this connection to recall that the Supreme Court of Bombay disallowed a gagging act in 1826, much to the chagrin of the Governor.

Lord Amherst, the next Governor-General, gradually relaxed the restrictions on the Press. Lord William Bentinck, who succeeded, esteemed the Press as a friend of the Government, and actually confessed that he learnt more from it than from all other sources of information. But even he, on one occasion, seriously considered a proposal to gag the Press, but was restrained by Metcalfe, then a member of council, who took a sane and balanced view of all criticism. Once the Governor of Bombay, bubbling over with resentment over a Calcutta paper, strongly urged its suppression. Metcalfe coolly replied that an action against the editor was the wisest course under the circumstances. Not often since those days has any executive councillor displayed similar wisdom when pressed to panicky action.

It is interesting to watch the course of the controversy that raged in those early days over the issue of a free press in India. In 1822, Sir Thomas Munro wrote a candid minute on the "Danger of a Free Press in India," from which the psychology that underlies all attempts at gagging the Press is easily grasped. Said Sir Thomas;

“ A Free Press and the dominion of strangers are things which are quite incompatible and which cannot long exist together. For what is the duty of a Free Press? It is to deliver the country from a foreign yoke and to sacrifice to this one great object every meaner consideration: and if we make the Press really free to the natives as well as to the Europeans, it must inevitably lead to this result. We might wish that the Press should be used to convey moral and religious instruction to the natives and that its efforts should go no further. They will be satisfied with this for a time, but would soon learn to apply it to a political purpose, and to compare their situation and ours, and to overthrow our power,..... We cannot have a monopoly of the freedom of the Press. We cannot confine it to Europeans only. There is no device or contrivance by means of which this can be done, and if it be made really free, it must in time produce nearly the same consequences here which it does everywhere else. It must spread among the people the principles of liberty and stimulate them to expel the strangers who rule over them and to establish a national government.....

“ In countries not under a foreign government, the spirit of freedom gradually grows up with the early education and knowledge among

the body of the people ; in this country, while under our rule, its course would be quiet and uniform, unattended by any sudden commotion : and the change in the character and opinions of the people might be met by suitable changes in the form of our government. But we cannot with any reason expect this silent and tranquil revolution. For owing to the unnatural state in which India will be placed by a foreign government with a free press and a native army, the spirit of independence will spring up in their army long before it is thought of among the people. The army will not wait for the slow operation of the instruction of the people, and the growth of liberty among them, but will hasten to execute their own measures for the overthrow of the Government and the recovery of national independence, which they will soon learn from the press it is their duty to accomplish.....The Press must be restrained either by a censor or by the power of sending home at once the publisher of any libellous or inflammatory paper, at the responsibility of the government, without the Supreme Court having authority on any plea whatever to detain him for a single day.....The desire of independence and of governing themselves, which in every country follows the progress of knowledge, ought to spring up and become general among

the people, before it reaches the army: and there can be no doubt that it will become general in India, if we do not prevent it by ill-judged precipitation by seeking to effect in a few years changes which must be the work of generations. By mild and equitable Government, by promoting the dissemination of useful books among natives without attacking their religions, by protecting their own numerous schools, by encouraging by honorary or pecuniary marks of distinction those where the best system of education prevails, by occasional allowance from the public revenue to such as stand in need of this aid, and by giving a greater share in the civil administration of the country, and holding out the prospect of filling places of rank and emolument as inducements to the attainment of knowledge, we shall by degrees banish superstition, and introduce among the natives of India the enlightened opinions and doctrines which prevail in this country."

Mounstuart Elphinstone viewed with misgiving the prospect of the purely Indian section of the press being emancipated. "If all be free," he remarked, "we shall be in a predicament which no state has yet experienced. In other countries, the use of the press has gradually extended with the improvement of the Govern-

ment and the intelligence of the people : but we shall have to contend at once with the most refined theories of Europe, and with the prejudices and the fanaticism of Asia, both rendered doubly formidable by the imperfect education of those to whom every appeal will be addressed." The Court of Directors argued that a free press was the organ of a self-governing democracy, the accompaniment of a representative government. They declared with a charming naivete that the free press for India was to be found in England, as England governed India. Metcalfe refused to listen to this kind of talk. His views are expressed with admirable candour and force in a speech he delivered to the citizens of Calcutta, in reply to an address presented to him :

"To all who doubt the expediency of the freedom of the press, I would say they have to show that it must necessarily cause imminent peril to public safety, such as would not exist without it, and cannot be averted by salutary laws : for otherwise there can be no doubt that freedom of public discussion, which is nothing more than the freedom of speaking aloud, is a right belonging to the people, which no Government has a right to withhold. It also rests with them to show that the communication of knowledge is a curse and not a benefit,

and that the essence of good government is to cover the land with darkness: for otherwise, it must be admitted to be one of the imperative duties of a government to confer the incalculable blessings of knowledge on the people: and by what means can this be done more effectively than by the unrestrained liberty of publication and by the stimulus which it gives to the powers of the mind. If their argument be that the spread of knowledge may eventually be fatal to our rule in India, I close with them on this point and declare that if India could be preserved as a part of the British Empire by keeping its inhabitants in a state of ignorance, our domination would be a curse to the country, and ought to cease.

“But I see more ground for just apprehension in ignorance itself. I look to the increase of knowledge with the hope that it may strengthen our Empire; that it may remove prejudices, soften asperities, and substitute a rational conviction of the benefits of our government: that it may unite the people and their rulers in sympathy: and that the differences which separate them may gradually be lessened and ultimately be annihilated. Whatever, however, be the will of the Almighty providence respecting the future government of India, it is clearly our duty as long as the charge is confined to our

hands, to execute the trust to the best of our ability for the good of the people. The promotion of knowledge of which the liberty of the press is one of the most efficient instruments, is manifestly an essential part of that duty. It cannot be that we are permitted by divine authority to be here merely to collect the revenues of the country, pay the establishment necessary to keep possession, and get into debt to supply the deficiency. We are doubtless here for higher purposes: one of which is to pour the enlightened knowledge and civilization of Europe over the land, and improve the condition of the people. Nothing surely is more likely to conduce to these ends than the liberty of the press. Those who object to it are further bound to show that it is not salutary for the government and the functionaries to have the check of a free press on their conduct, and that the exercise of arbitrary powers over a restricted press is preferable to the control of the laws over a free one—assumptions which cannot be maintained.”

Finally, Metcalfe clinched the issue by declaring the repeal of the restrictions not only justifiable on general principles, but also unavoidable in the circumstances. “The Indian press,” he said, “had been practically free for many years, including the whole period of the

administration of Lord William Bentinck : and although laws of restriction existed in Bengal which gave awful power to the government, they had ceased to operate for any practical purpose. They are extremely obious. They gave to the government arbitrary power, which British subjects in any part of the world detest. No government could now have carried them into effect, without setting universal opinion at defiance. After the liberty given by Lord William Bentinck's forbearance no government could have ventured to enforce these laws, unless it had been gifted with a most hardy insensibility to ridicule and obloquy."

In an official minute replying to a suggestion about the desirability of restricting the liberties of the Indian section of the press, Metacalfe observed : "A tenure dependent on attempts to suppress public opinion could not be lasting : both because such a tenure must be rotten, and because such attempts must fail." Macaulay, in introducing the repeal of the old press regulations said that "it is difficult to conceive any measure can be more indefensible than those I propose to repeal."

In substance Metacalfe simply repealed the press regulations of 1823 in Bengal and of 1825 and 1827 in Bombay, and ordained that every person having a printing press on his premises

was to make declaration thereof; and that within the Company's territories, the printer and the publisher of all periodical works containing public news or comments on public news, should appear and declare when it was to be printed and published. When the measure, which was received with acclamation throughout India, and for the sake of which a grateful public erected the Metcalfe Hall in Calcutta, was first announced to the Court of Directors, they were furious. They overlooked Metcalfe's claims to preferment, he resigned and went home. Lord Metcalfe was the only Governor-General who can be said to have stood by his principles even at the cost of his office; and his example has naturally not been emulated.

Robert Knight was the dominant figure in the world of Indian journalism during the fifties of the last century. He came to India in 1847 as an agent of a firm of wine-importers, and soon drifted towards the Press.* He joined Dr. Buist's *Bombay Times* first as a paid contributor, and then acted several times as the editor. His most characteristic act during those days was the wisdom with which he counselled justice towards the maligned millions,

* It may here be mentioned that the first John Walter was a coal merchant and underwriter whom the American War ruined and turned to journalism.

who were not mutineers, but whom a race temporarily affected with homicidal mania was eager to torture and to destroy. In 1861 he purchased the paper and incorporated it with the *Standard*; and the 'Bombay Times' was rechristened as the 'Times of India.' When Indian claims were likely to be ignored for lack of advocates, Robert Knight undertook the duty of expounding a point of view which was alike distasteful and strange to the community to which he belonged. While in England he inspired Fawcett, who had the distinction of being known as the Member for India: and Knight was among those who founded the East India Association. Subsequently he severed his connection with the 'Times of India,' and transferred his activities to Calcutta, where he bought the *Statesman*, which in his hands began to display superior journalistic technique. It owes its admirable order and array as well as "that other inspiration of genius, its Sunday edition, with its wealth of Special Shorts, to its founder. It fostered Indian political aspirations with Non-Conformist conscientiousness and tentation." He took up and discussed the right of adoption, the misapplication of Indian revenues to British purposes, the electric telegraph, the license tax, the Press Bill, the waste land question etc. His sons, Paul and

Robert Knight, modernised the paper. They introduced the first rotary presses and utilised the railways for distribution. When the rival *Englishman* was selling at four annas a copy, they reduced the price of the "Statesman" to the democratic one anna. It may here be added that the "Statesman" still continues to hold pride of place in the newspaper press of the country; and barring hatred of everything Indian when Mr. Jones was its directing chief in the opening decades of this country, it has well shown its desire to be "a healing racial influence, submitting all public subjects to candid discussion without rancour and with the hope of helping to bring the diversity of men's minds into the harmony that enables progress to be achieved." In 1931 it opened a new chapter in its history by publishing a Delhi edition. Under the peculiar limitations that political conditions impose on British journalism in India, the "Statesman" has been as progressive in its attitude towards India as it could be. The same might be said of the 'Times of India' under Sir Stanley Reed.

Meredith White Townsend, later destined to make his mark in British journalism, began his literary career in India. When a boy of 17 he came over to India (in 1848) to assist John Clarke Marshman, the famous missionary, in

editing the weekly "Friend of India," (founded as a monthly in 1821, converted into a weekly in 1835 and later amalgamated with the "Statesman.") Very soon he became the proprietor of the journal. It was a one-man's job, as Townsend wrote everything except the advertisements. He also edited a Bengallee paper, the "Satya Pradip" formerly known as "Samachar Darpan." He succeeded Col. Meadows Taylor as the correspondent of the London "Times." In 1859 he was ordered home by medical advisers. During his tenure of the editorship, he received encomia from Dalhousie and Canning. *

During the Mutiny there was an emergency act directed against the Press but it was short-lived: and it was aimed more at the English newspapers than those in Indian languages that had not yet attained much prominence. † It was quite simple and clear. Any periodical that published news or comments which might be

* Townsend held some decidedly curious views about India. For instance, he believed that India would soon become Mahomedan. In his book, "Asia and Europe," he arrived at the conclusion, later familiarised by Kipling: "The fusion of the continents has never occurred, and in the author's judgment will never occur."

† John Stuart Mill wrote: "The English newspaper press in India is the organ only of the English society, and chiefly that part of it unconnected with the Government. It has little to do with the natives and with the great interests of India." A criticism which still has its force.

deemed by Government to be injurious to its interests might be suppressed by notification. Avowedly a temporary measure, it was repealed as soon as the emergency which called it forth passed away.

THE POST-MUTINY ERA.

Soon after the Mutiny, Indian journalism began to develop with rapid strides. The *Hindoo Patriot*, which later in the hands of Kristo Das Pal, whom Sir C. P. Ilbert described as "a great orator and journalist who would have made his mark in any country and at any time," was to become a power in the land, was started in 1849 as the "Bengal Recorder" by Girish Chandra Ghose. Its name was changed in 1853, and its second proprietor died in the year 1860. After changing hands several times, about the end of 1861, Kristo Das Pal became sole proprietor and editor. It came into his hands as a dying concern, declining systematically. Sir C. P. Ilbert has thus described his tenure of the editorship: "succeeding at the age of some of the graduates of to-day to the management of one of the oldest organs of public opinion in this country, by the readiness and versatility of his pen, by the patient industry which he displayed in mastering the details of the subjects with which he undertook

to deal, by the fairness, breadth and moderation of his utterances, he gradually and steadily advanced its reputation during his twenty-three years of editorship and raised it from nearly a moribund condition to the first place among native Indian journals." It may be mentioned here that, though the paper was started by Girish Chandra Ghose, it had become the property of Hari Chandra Mukherjee, who really was the effective founder of the paper and continued the editor till his death in 1851. Thereafter the paper was purchased by Kali Prasanna Sinha, who after running it for a time at a loss made it over to that stout-hearted man, citizen and friend, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. It was Vidyasagar then who was responsible for the induction, first as editor and then as proprietor, of Kristo Das Pal, who made the paper a power in the land as already described. Bengal about the time on which we are now embarked was peculiarly fortunate in a succession of powerful writers who laid the foundations of that admirable literature as we know it to-day. We had long left Ram Mohan Roy behind; and at this epoch there rose over the firmament Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. He was the first among vernacular journalists to realise the seriousness of an editor's position. In his hands the "Banga Darshan" outran all its

rivals, and the date of its birth, 1872, has been hailed as heralding a new epoch in Bengallee literature. It grew to be a force in the country. It had been observed by a competent critic that "Vidyasagar polished the language and advanced it a step, but he did not fully succeed. He rounded the keen edges, and added grace and elegance. But he could not rescue it from the influence of Sanskrit. Michael felt no need of reform as the pure literary form of the language was more suitable to the expression of his ideas in composing his sublime poem. But Bankim found himself confronted with a great difficulty. His object was to popularise literature and to make his countrymen believe that great things can be written in Bengallee." To return, for long the "Hindoo Patriot" represented with vigour and ability the views of enlightened Hindus. As a writer, it has been said of Kristodas that "he used the simplest forms of expression, but avoided colloquial vulgarisms. He employed but little the arts of rhetoric in his maturer years. His style was lucid, logical and unpretentious." There was indeed no affectation about the man or his style.

But, by and by, owing to his connection with the British Indian Association (of landholders) of which he was secretary or because events were moving with a breathless haste,

the *Hindoo Patriot* failed to keep pace with the spirit of the times in Bengal. It became bound to Zamindari interests: and the younger nationalists quickly gathered round another brilliant figure that for more than sixty years to come was to influence the national movement so powerfully as to merit for the person the appellation of the "trumpet voice of India." Every one knows by now the circumstances that led to Surendra Nath Bannerjea devoting himself to public life. He generously put himself at the head of the pulsating and youthful nationalism of those days; and in 1878-9, to advocate the new point of view, purchased the *Bengallee*, started in 1861, and made it a powerful instrument of nationalist propaganda. For long it had the distinction of being the only Indian newspaper to subscribe for Reuter's cables, a fact the reader was not allowed to lose sight of. "An unbiassed Critic," in reviewing his "A Nation in Making," observed: "Surendranath was connected with journalism for four long decades which witnessed the fusion of diverse elements into one great homogeneous and compact national party. As editor he exalted his office, position and dignity. His attitude towards antagonists was scrupulously fair and he never lapsed into a petty provincial groove. He valiantly demolished

his adversaries but never overstepped the limits of courtesy and propriety. The ceaseless battles he fought with the bureaucrats, whenever they encroached on the liberties of action and speech, will be gratefully remembered by all.”* He himself has stated that in his work as a journalist he tried to avoid sedition, libel and personal recriminations. He was the only Indian journalist invited to the Imperial Press Conference in all the many years of its sessions. It is now learnt that the choice lay between him and Behramji M. Malabari; but in view of Surendranath’s unique position he was finally chosen. How he acquitted himself there, his rebuke to Lord Cromer, who mouthed one of those superstitions about Orientals being unfit for freedom of the Press: all this the reader will see for himself in any one of a number of books relating to Surendranath’s life and career. His great newspaper long oscillated on the stage, flaunting his name incongruously on the front page as founder and editor, but giving expression to policies and opinions he had strenuously resisted during the operative portion of his journalistic career. By and by, after various changes and chances, it gave up its embarrassed existence, and reappeared as the “Star of India,” an exponent of Moslem opinions.

* *Hindusthan Review*, July 1925.

In 1858 Shishir Kumar Ghose and his brother, Motilal Ghose, founded the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, as a Bengallee weekly. The following written in commemoration of Motilal Ghose will bear repetition here: "The story of the 'Amrita Bazaar Patrika' which carries the mind at once to the evil days of the Vernacular Press Act, when the baffling ingenuity and resourceful perseverance of a noble band of brothers converted overnight a vernacular journal into an English organ is one of those few romances of Indian journalism on which one's memory is apt long to linger fondly. Of its founder and first editor, Srijut Shishir Kumar Ghose, there is a larger volume of literature than is available of any contemporary Indian journalist. Austere, uncompromisingly independent and keenly alive to all the needs of the country, he was hailed by the Lokamanya as his guru in a fine tribute at his anniversary. Yet Shishir Kumar's interests lay not in the politics of the hour, though undoubtedly he it was that gave the tone to the paper, but in that marked way of life faintly indicated by the volume on Gauranga and analogous studies, which he would surely have enriched our literature with, had not his shining course run before he had many years of spiritual self-collection. And consequently in the strenuous days that

opened on this country under the Viceroyalty of the ubiquitous Lord Curzon, it was Motilal Ghose who had the editorial direction of the *Patrika*, which at the time of his death had run a course of over half a century. A fine record this by itself. Nationalists and publicists of all the colours will bear evidence to the uprightness and the independence with which the *Patrika* has exposed every abuse in any corner of this country. And all this was lighted up with a lambent, playful humour that never hurt. Serious contributions to the philosophy of politics may perhaps be hardly expected of any working journalist: but if a sure-footed perception of all the facts of a case, vigilance for the public interests in a country where they are only too apt to be betrayed by sheer *vis inertiae*, a watchdog-like outlook for encroachments on the citizen's liberty and a keen appreciation of the need for unity of all the political elements of a subject nation, with a sure eye for the undying national ideals, constitute the glory of a journalist's life, that was Motilal Ghose's in generous measure, such as has been given only to a few among his contemporaries. He had not cultivated the habit of trimming his sails to suit his particular idiosyncracies; nor was he apt to idealise over much in flagrant defiance of realities. And only those who would by any means

rule out the saving grace of humour can deny to his writings powerfulness of appeal or forcefulness of touch. His persevering ingenuity, with that quick eye which detects the ludicrousness of an acute situation, is well-known. One instance thereof was quoted by A. G. G., in his sketch of Lord Curzon. Yet another is his delving into ancient history to find out that the ban on the Gandhi cap had its counterpart in an 18th century enactment proscribing the use of Highland dress under threat of dire penalties. Austere himself and a lover of the simple life, like his illustrious brother, his was an abiding influence of rare potency in Indian journalism, which has now fallen on evil days and is menaced with ever increasing danger and darkness. Ill as we could spare him, the country will long cherish the memory of that weird figure which suggested a detachment from sordid earth, that was at once a stern exemplar and a call to duty, from that peculiarly Indian stand-point that he so loved to dwell upon." *

Shishir Kumar was a capital raconteur, and had a pawky sense of humour, which he shared with his brother. Of Motilal, we may as well add here, Montagu records in his Diary : "The charming old editor of the *A. B. Patrika*. He is a fine old boy, gentle in his manner, with a

* *The Hindu*, September 6, 1922.

strong sense of humour, a devout Brahman, a fierce politician, thoroughly bitter, with a profound disbelief in public of our intentions, though accepting them in private." Which last sentiment apparently means that Motilal Ghose effectively pulled the Secretary of State's legs.

Shortly after the Mutiny the *Pioneer* of Allahabad came to occupy a position, almost unique, as the organ of the Government, the position that Spender's "Westminster Gazette" occupied during the Campbell-Bannerman ministry. It was always first with the official news. No less a person than Lyall admitted to Blunt, while the latter was travelling in India, that the "Pioneer" was an official news-sheet. The real distinction of the "Pioneer" is due to two causes. The first, now no longer operative, is that it had ever been the most manful and unwearying opponent of Indian constitutional reform, and made itself the mouthpiece of the views, politics and prejudices of the Services, civil and military. The second arises from Kipling's association with it. Rudyard Kipling was born in India in 1865, the son of John Lockwood Kipling, who held for many years the position of curator, Art Museum, Lahore. Rudyard returned to India in his seventeenth year, after finishing his education in England. Rumour has it that he was first refused the

office of a sub-editor in the "Pioneer," though the related "Civil and Military Gazette" thought better. While in the position of a sub, he contributed serially "Plain Tales from the Hills," said to be a development of his mother's letters from Simla, to the "Pioneer." Afterwards he sprang into fame by the publication of his now famous works. But from the point of view of Indian journalism, what is most interesting is the series of travel sketches, later collected under the title "From Sea to Sea," which he published in his newspaper, while touring round the world. Arnold Wright was another famous name which shed lustre on Indian journalism, widely interpreted, though for a brief space.

In 1877-78, Sirdar Dayal Singh Majithia started at Lahore the *Tribune*. Surendra Nath Bannerjee takes the credit for persuading the Sardar Saheb to embark on the venture. "I purchased for him," states Surendranath, "at Calcutta the first press for the *Tribune* newspaper and to me he entrusted the duty of selecting the first editor. I recommended the late Sitala Kanta Chatterjee of Dacca for the post, and his successful career as the first editor amply justified my choice. His fearless courage, his penetrating insight into the heart of things, and above all his supreme honesty of purpose,

the first and last qualification of an Indian journalist, soon placed him in the front rank of those who wielded their pen in the defence of their country's interests. The *Tribune* rapidly became a powerful organ of public opinion; it is now perhaps the most influential Indian journal in the Punjab, and is edited by a gentleman who in his early career was associated with me as a member of the staff of the *Bengallee*." Kali Nath Roy maintains a fairness of outlook, an impartiality of judgment and a moderation of tone that make the newspaper respected everywhere. With the demise of the *Punjabee*, which made a fitful appearance on the stage during the days of what used to be called the New Movement within the Congress, the "Tribune" represents unquestionably the views of the Hindu nationalists of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier.

In the same year G. Subbramaniam Iyer and Veeraraghavachariar started the *Hindu* of Madras as a weekly. The success of the "Hindu," Mr. Kelkar long ago observed, is simply an object-lesson of what a couple of young, educated gentlemen without money, but with brains and perseverance, can accomplish in the line of journalism. It is, today, a daily paper that Indians may hold up as a fair sample of their journalistic ability and respectability. The

"Hindu" has had its fair share of critics and detractors: yet, it is impossible to think of many newspapers in the country that are so affectionately thought of in the province and by the people for whom they cater as the "Hindu" in Madras. It was meant to supply the place once occupied by the "Crescent," the organ of the Native Association, which had considerable influence during the fifties of the last century under the wise leadership of Lakshminarasu Chettiar. But for some reason the Association died and with it the paper. Its functions then devolved upon the "Native Public Opinion" and the "Madrassi," with which it was later amalgamated. This journal soon passed into "undesirable hands." And the consequence of it was the starting of the "Hindu." Its conversion into a daily after a brief career as a thrice-weekly publication was followed by its rapid rise in the public estimation. Nobody at this time of day can imagine what daring, resource, originality must have marked those early impecunious pioneers, who, without being content with their vocation of instructors of our bouncing youth, jumped to be the educators of their race and countrymen. The record of the "Hindu" through all the dark days of the Wenlock regime, and later, the Lawley and the Pentland governorships, is the kind of thing that has

endeared it to the people among whom it was born. Subbramania Iyer was indefatigable in the unravelling of plots against the public interests, and, as happened in at least two notable instances, in attacking abuses intended to hoodwink or ruin individuals. And he was practically almost alone among the Indian journalists of his days in devoting considerable attention to economics and finance, a peculiarity that Madrassi journalists still maintain.

But its present position, of being the best-equipped and most prosperous of Indian nationalist newspapers, the "Hindu" owes entirely to the genius of one man: S. Kasturi Runga Iyengar. Of the most famous editor the world has perhaps ever seen, it has been stated that he took the chair at the age of 23. But Delane had some preliminary fooling about the office, where his father was manager: and he never had anything to do with the managerial department of the "Times." Here everything was shipshape and conducted by others. But, Mr. Iyengar was 48, when after a career first as government servant and next as a practising advocate, he took command of the "Hindu," then being tossed about in financial distress. And he was his own manager. Marvellous improvements he made in the technique of his paper; and at the same time made the vessel seaworthy. It is

not mere vanity that induces the present writer to transcribe here some lines he wrote at the time of his universally deplored death :

“Those who had ever the privilege of meeting him, and knowing at first hand his urbanity, that old-world grace and charm of his manner, his quick eye to detect all the bearings of a problem, his easy and assured self-mastery, his avoidance of irritating side-issues, his calmness, his detached and thoroughly independent view on men and policies, will see that he was the journalist par excellence. Such an attitude has its inconveniences as the bearer thereof often comes into clash with the trimmers, the man-pleasers and the great brood of idols of the market-place. It is to his everlasting credit that he kept to the straight course unflinching and adamant-like.....His abiding mark on the India of his day will be his contribution to Journalism, the elevation of its standards of competency and morale..... It is impossible to resist the temptation to compare him with the other two outstanding personalities who had such a large share in the creation of Indian journalism. The late great Lokamanya, to whose politics Mr. Iyengar always gave a willing if informal assent, was pre-eminently a man of action, of a resistless inborn impulse to be in the midst of the fray and sub-

ordinated his journalism to that overmastering impulse to strike a resounding blow for his country's freedom. To compare a political leader like the Lokamanya with a political engineer like Mr. Iyengar is to do justice to the merits of neither. Motilal Ghosh used journalism as a weapon to smite the tyrannous strong.....The nearest approach to our great Editor that we can find is that 'serious and admirable journalist,' John Lemoine, whose example Mathew Arnold pressed Lord Morley to follow." *

But this pre-eminence was not won without the help of ardent coadjutors and willing assistants. Of one of them, who after pleasantly straying in other paths has returned to the fold, it is impossible to say anything here lest he should overhear us.† Of S. Rengaswami, worthy son of worthy father, too early lost to his country and to the profession, just as he was reaching out to the full maturity of his astonishing powers, it will not be out of place to say a word here. He it was beyond any one who made the reputation of the paper on its literary side. And though he belongs to the Post-Congress era in our journalism, it may be well

* *The Hindu Message.*

† Alas! Mr. A. Rengaswami Iyengar has since been lost to the profession and his country.

to state here that the crisp vigour of his phrases was a reflection of his own robust and masculine intellect : and the command of ready invective, of a raillery so polished that it gladdened the victims even as they winced, flowed incongruously enough from a heart non-violent and kind even to the verge of timidity. Shy and retiring by nature, he was kindness itself to those who ever came into contact with him. The penetration of his intellect was seen in the weekly summaries of the Great War, wherein he went to the heart of campaigns in areas and over a terrain to which he was such an utter stranger ; and rarely were his forecasts falsified by the event. It is impossible to assess the full extent of the loss to the country and to the profession by the too early disappearance of this matchless and non-pareil journalist.

In 1882 G. Subbramania Iyer started the *Swadesamitran* one of the leading vernacular papers of India. There is hardly a hamlet in the Tamil land where this paper has not penetrated. Though there have been more recently some powerful competitors, it is possible they may not be able to oust the "Mitran" completely from its pride of place. In its technique and the formulation and expression of opinion, it very closely follows the "Hindu," : its contribution to the political awakening of the Tamil

land and its influence in setting the style on the Tamil platform have been unbounded.

The *Bombay Chronicle* did not come into existence till much later. The story of its foundation has been given in some detail by Pat Lovett. Sir Pherozechah Mehta founded it in 1913 to counteract the campaign carried on by the Anglo-Indian Press of Bombay to manoeuvre him out of his position on the Corporation. Though till then nationalist journalism in Bombay went without a representative, it must not be forgotten it had a strong and powerful vernacular press. In fact it might be stated that we have in that presidency the oldest of Indian vernacular newspapers. The strength of native English journalism in this country is in other provinces; while as a general rule it may be safe to state that vernacular journalism occupies a great position in the western presidency and upper India generally. C. R. Das acquired the "Indian Daily News" of Calcutta, formerly under the control of David Yule, and reissued it under the name, *Forward*, in 1922, and it has since been succeeded by the "New Forward," and the "Liberty." The "Leader" of Allahabad, which has acquired so much influence in the hands of Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, who had his journalistic tutelage under the veteran Subbramania Iyer, was originally the

"Indian People," a weekly edited by Pandit Ayudhyanath, that marvel of a man. It is doubtful if any other newspaper in this country has had as many public men associated with the directorate as was the case with this Allahabad newspaper.

We must however retrace our way. In telling the story of the ramified growth of Indian journalism and dwelling on some of its leading personalities, we have necessarily anticipated a little. It is essential to continue our narration of the struggle between the Press and the bureaucracy in the years succeeding the Mutiny. Gradually the position was becoming clarified. There was the British Press, always for some reason called the Anglo-Indian Press, ever ready to pat the Government on the back. As Mr. Kelkar once observed, in the beginning of the 19th century the liberty of the Press was fought for by forceful Anglo-Indian journalists and large-minded Anglo-Indian statesmen. But by the end of the century things had changed, and British journalists veered round to the view of the fellow-Englishmen who comprised the garrison. There was the genuine Indian Press, uneasy and disturbed, and in spite of infancy exhibiting not a little of aplomb, trying to formulate new and startlingly unexpected points of view. It

had begun in fact to outline a programme of nationalism, strangely at variance with the preconceived notions of the rulers. The Government began to pay greater attention to the writings of the vernacular press. Sir Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in the sixties, arranged for a weekly abstract of the more important articles, circulated the same to the officials, and made it available to the English Press. This directed the attention of the covenanted civil service, the most powerful corporation in the world, to the question of sedition. Finally, the Wahabi Conspiracy of 1869-70 brought matters to a head. Macaulay, in the original penal code, had drafted a provision on seditious writings; but the legislature had been consistently unwilling to allow it to become part of the law of the land. But the persuasive eloquence of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen won the day, and the great jurist managed to secure the assent of the legislature to a repressive section, in a speech breathing the very spirit of liberalism. "So long as a writer or speaker neither directly nor indirectly suggested or intended to suggest or intended to produce the use of force," Sir James assured the council, "he did not fall within this section.Let it be shown that the matter complained of was not consistent with a disposition

to obey the law, let it be shown that it was consistent only with a disposition to resist the law by force, and it did fall under this section. Otherwise not."

For some years this opinion of the Law Member held the field, and the Government were unwilling to resort to the section, following the English precedent. That this interpretation was wrong, and that Stephen's sedition section was capable of much stricter application, our legal history for the last three decades has abundantly shown. But the fact was that the section remained more or less a dead letter for some time to come. Lord Dufferin, for example, refused to sanction the prosecution of the "Patrika" even when Sir Lepel Griffin pressed vigorously therefor. The bureaucracy obviously hated the qualifications in the section, and distrusted the jurisdiction of a High Court. They wanted threats and discipline. In 1875, the Secretary of State drew the attention of the Government of India to the need for a more stringent application of the section. But Lord Northbrooke thought that the state of the law did not permit of frivolous prosecution, which seems to have been the main desire of the Grand Moghul at White-Hall. When Lytton became the Viceroy, the matter was further pressed. And the result was the Vernacular Press Act of

1878. * As the biographer of Ripon says, "Lytton had a bill drafted giving the magistrate power, with the consent of the local Government, to take security from a newspaper that it would not publish any matter (a) of a seditious nature or (b) having for its subject extortion. The Local Government might, after warning, declare the security forfeited: or it might seize the plant of a paper which had not deposited security. An appeal might be made to the Government of India, but there was no appeal to any judicial body. The Act, only applied to vernacular papers, and only to such parts of British India as the Governor-General of India might proclaim for such a purpose. Lytton telegraphed a summary of the bill to the Secretary of State, and on the plea of urgency, obtained leave to pass it through the Legislative Council at a single sitting, and before the Secretary of State had seen the full text, This procedure was strongly criticised by three of the members of the Secretary of State's Council; but the majority were in favour of leaving the Act to its operation, subject to the amendment of some subsidiary provisions."

*When the opinions of the Local Governments were taken on this measure, only Madras stood out against the proposed legislation; while the other provinces expressed themselves in favour of it in some form or other. *Vide* Lucien Wolf; *Marquess of Ripon*, Vol. ii, Page 109.

The frank racial discrimination found in the measure reveals the real spirit which actuated its movers. A free press, even when only Englishmen dominated it, was considered by the Government a noxious growth, until the imprudent and honest liberalism of Metcalfe killed for the time being all reactionary policy. But, in the seventies, for the first time, Indian enterprise was making headway in the journalistic field. And Indian journalists could not be expected to play second fiddle to a foreign ruling authority, especially when in vital matters that authority contemplated injustice to Indian interests. A "Pioneer" was welcome; a "Statesman" could be tolerated; but an Indian journalist—no! Rumours of a move against the Press were rife for more than a year before the measure was actually passed. At the Delhi Durbar, which was nominally called to proclaim to the Indian people the assumption of the title of Empress by the Queen, but really to demonstrate to the Indian Princes their position of unrelieved vassalage, the Press presented an address to the Viceroy praying for the withholding of further gags, but to no purpose. The measure so long in incubation was rushed through as an emergency bill. The object of the act was stated by Sir Alexander Arbuthnot,

who introduced the bill, to be two-fold : first, to repress the seditious writings in the vernacular newspapers, and, second, to check the system of extortion to which Indian Princes, and employees, it was alleged, were subjected by unscrupulous editors.* No evidence was given in support of these allegations, but the bill was easily passed, Jotindra Mohan Tagore, the one Indian member of the Council, so the report went, having been sent for, and spoken to by the Viceroy, and voting with the Government. Its provisions we have seen already. But all these dread disasters might be averted, if only the suspected journalists consented to be shepherded by a censor, when no security would be demanded. Cynics might describe this as the re-establishment, under threat of blackmail, of an office universally condemned. Finally, no appeal lay to any judicial authority. Thus the civilian had his dreams fulfilled.

In supporting the measure Lord Lytton made a speech which is worth close study, as a rehash of the age-old arguments of imperialist historians against the rash generosity of

* This is a malady of the mind that often attacks the civilian corps. See Sir William Vincent's questions to and the replies of Mr. K. C. Roy in the Press Law Repeal Committee of 1922. Sir William launched a calumnious insinuation, but stayed not to prove it, or to apologise to the calumniated.

Metcalfe. The Viceroy spoke of the exceptional tolerance accorded by his Government to "the occasional misuse of an instrument confided to unpractised hands." But, alas, it was misplaced mercy. The rod had been too long spared, and the child was getting spoilt beyond redemption. Hence he had decided with infinite regret to withdraw all semblance of legal rights from Indian journalists, and to place them under the parental control of the official Daniels who would limit their adventures.* The Liberal Party in England did not view with complacency this invasion of the liberties of the subjects of Her Majesty. There was in those days no artificial party unity about India, by which all serious discussion of Indian affairs is tabooed, and whatever policy suits the party in power is pursued. Gladstone protested and protested strongly. He said: "They (the people of India) have or think they have plenty of cause for complaint. I am sorry to say that I regard this Press Act as one of the most salient among them.....I think, if one thing is more obvious than another, it is that whatever we give we should not retract, and when we have communicated to India the

* For a vigorous defence of Lord Lytton's reactionary policy, see Lady Betty Balfour's *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*.

benefit which is perhaps the greatest of all those that we enjoy under our own institution, viz., the publicity of proceedings in which the nation is interested, and the allowance of sufficient time to consider them at their several stages, to afford security against wrong and error—it is deplorable in a case like this in India that the utmost haste should have been observed, not in amending or altering, but in completely overturning, as far as the Press was concerned, a cardinal part of the legislation of the country.” He moved an amendment in the House that any action taken by the authorities under the new Press Act must be intimated to the Secretary of State, who, obviously thinking this too great a burden on his over-weighted shoulders, stoutly opposed and defeated it. The only effect of all this discussion was the refusal of the sanction of the Secretary of State to the provision setting up the censorship anew. When Disraeli’s Government was succeeded by that of Gladstone, the Press Act was repealed. Lytton had also returned home, and Ripon was in his place. The new Viceroy did not let sleeping dogs lie. He bestirred himself about the Press Act. He styled Lytton’s painstaking anthology of sedition as so much “horrid rubbish.” Against the almost unanimous opposition of the civil

service, Ripon persisted in his course, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the statute-book "cleansed from that wretched piece of legislation."

In defence of the repeal Sir William Hunter made a speech characterised by statesman-like breadth of view. "The native Press," he said, "now had an opportunity which it never had before, and never before was so serious a desire evinced by the Government to give representative institutions a fair trial. The Indian Press was a Parliament always in session, and to which every native was eligible, who had anything to say that was worthy of being said.....It could not be denied that the action of a free Press among densely ignorant masses was attended with some peril. But the only remedy for the evils of popular ignorance is popular education. If, therefore, in finally emancipating the Press, the Government could also see its way more widely to educate the people, they would send forth liberty not alone on her travels, but liberty and sincerity hand in hand. A great work had already been done in public instruction on the basis of Wood's Despatches of 1854. But a still further extension of vernacular schools would form the true complement of the now perfected freedom of the vernacular Press." Here is yet another

interpretation of the early history of British journalism in India that might well be taken to heart by those who clamour for drastic action against the Indian Press. "The Anglo-Indian journalist did his daily work under the terrors of confiscation, fine, imprisonment and deportation. More than one of the pioneers of British journalism in India edited his paper from within the walls of a jail. Even after these rigours had fallen into disuse, the Anglo-Indian Press still remained disaffected so long as the repressive regulations remained unrepealed. It was not until Sir Charles Metcalfe in 1835 gave the sanction of law to the liberty of the Press that Anglo-Indian journalism became loyal."

Lord Lytton was responsible for an innovation. He created an officer known as the Press Commissioner, whose business it was to supervise the Press of the country, keep it informed of Government news, and give tips to journalists regarding what would please and what vex the rulers. In capable hands the office might perhaps become transformed into that of a liaison officer between the government and the Press: in others, as there seems unfortunate reason to apprehend is the case in Bengal today, it might establish the petty tyranny of a masqued censorship. The office, however, soon became defunct. Its subsequent

re-appearance under various modest and belittling pseudonyms has not encouraged the Press as a whole to look on it with kindly feelings.

THE POST-CONGRESS ERA

The next great event in the history of the Press in India was the starting of the Indian National Congress in 1885. But we might pause here to enquire into the nature of the Indian Press in the seventies and the early eighties of the last century. It was the age of the weeklies. "I remember speaking at the time," writes Surendra Nath Bannerjee, "to the headmaster of a government high school, a man of education and culture, who said to me that it took him a week's time to go through the 'Bengallee'; and that if it were a daily paper, he would not know what to do with it." Another competent and impartial observer says: "The newspapers of India, at least those edited in English, are neither on a par with our own, nor do they bear an equal relation to the mental powers of those whose views they expounded. I mean that, whereas in England an article in the 'Times' or in one of the leading magazines on a given subject is as a rule infinitely superior to the speeches statesmen are delivering on the same subject, in India oral

arguments are always the best. Nor is it too much to say that for conversation of a political character there are few races in the world that can equal those of India, or that it would be difficult to choose men from our own House of Commons capable of sustaining a successful argument with the best educated Indians on any of the subjects specially interesting to them." Newspapers in those days were primarily disseminators of opinion, and paid little or no attention to news as such. Bannerjee claims that his was the first among Indian Journals to subscribe to Reuters. Nonetheless Indian journalism in those days carried more weight with official India; Government, only recently awakened to the importance of nationalist agitation, was of two minds in dealing with the manifestations of public opinion, and the whole of Indian journalism in those days must have been amateurish, to say the least. Of the "Probhakar" of Iswar Chander Vidyasagar, for instance, which was probably the earliest vernacular paper in the country to treat of politics, so unprejudiced a critic as Ambica Charan Majumdar said that it dealt with politics with "faltering step and quivering hand." No nationalist had realised the international aspect of Indian political subjection, nor was he to realise it for a fairly

long time to come. And the Anglo-Indian papers were living in a world, if possible, even more unreal. A tried leader of the Congress once said that a subject people had no politics. The British Press in India fully occupied itself in pursuing the feuds of its home politics: Irish nationalists or those sympathising with them were strange unworthy creatures in the eyes of the leaders of the European society in India in those days. Pat Lovett describes those days as "an era in which the only politics described by the bulk of newspapers in India were English politics, with the Irish question as *piece de resistance*, and the Russian invasion of the north-west frontier as an inexhaustible beaker of heady wine. There was an editor I knew in those days, an Irishman by the same token, who boasted that out of three hundred leaders he had written in a single year, no less than two hundred were fulminations against the Muscovite Terror. He honestly believed that they made the Bear tremble and pause."

It was the Congress which changed this state of affairs. It gave the editors topics of greater interest, far less unreal than the Fenian menace or the Tsarist bogey. Indian journalists found themselves formulating national policies and directing national efforts in a manner unprecedented in history. The first fruits of the

Congress agitation were found in the Legislative Councils Act of 1892, which introduced the elective principle though furtively. "But such as it was, the Lansdowne Act was a white stone in the progress of journalism, which has since proceeded *pari passu* with the expansion of political freedom. The debates in the central legislature acquired a new zest for the leading newspapers, which had consequently to be enlarged and produced at a heavier cost. The day of the manager had dawned, and he has never looked back."*

One of the unexpected by-products was the growth of a separate movement amongst the Indian Moslems, under back-door official inspiration, say some and no, say others. In the middle of the last century, a well-known governor stated that *divide et impera* must be the policy of the British in India. From the time of the Mutiny onwards, Moslems were *non persona grata* with the rulers, who were under the impression that the community must be watched, as it might feel tempted to recover the supremacy it had in the spacious days of the Great Moghul. And so for a brief space, the Hindus were patronised at the expense of the Moslems. But when the favoured Hindus started a nationalist agitation, the pendulum swung to the

* Pat Lovett : *Journalism in India*.

other side. A score of years after the establishment of the Congress Sir Bampfylde Fuller referred to the Moslem community as the younger and favourite wife of the government. Any one anxious to see this re-orientation of policy might profitably study Lala Lajpat Rai's Open Letters to Sir Syed Ahmad of Aligarh wherein the latter is confronted with an astonishing change in views about the year 1884. Here, however, the matter is of interest only as it encouraged the growth of an Urdu press, formulating a Pan-Islamic policy, which, for a space in recent years, assumed enormous proportions. The first Urdu journal, however, is stated to have been edited by a Hindu, Nawal Kishore, who established in Lucknow a literary paper of the name of "Oudh Abkar." Mention may also be made of the "Fyza Abkar" of Lahore, before we come to the work of Sir Syed Ahmad in the field of journalism. He did yeoman service to the community through the Aligarh College Magazine and the "Tahzibul Akhlaque", (the Social Reformer), started in the year 1870. It was a distinct landmark in the history of Urdu literature, say the critics; and a great share of the success of the journal was due to the powerful co-operation of Syed Mehdi Ali, Nawab Mohain-ul-mulk. The "Vadan" of Lahore was also responsible for a

good deal of unobtrusive pan-Islamic propaganda. Maulana Mohammed Ali's "Hamdard" had a meteoric career and proved the astonishing literary ability of the Maulana: he was later to burst on the Indian firmament as a fiery politician and dangerous controversialist. It is only in recent years that Moslem journalism, so called, has begun to develop. How far this is the result of an inner urge in the community and how much of it is the effervescence of propaganda by important sectional leaders time will show. Efforts were at one time made to start a rival news agency to the Associated Press of India to give what will perhaps be news from the Muslim point of view. The "Muslim Outlook" of Lahore and the "Mussalman" of Calcutta are among the important organs of Moslem opinion in the English language, while the "Eastern Times," and the "Star of India," the first at Lahore edited by a Madrassi convert to Islam and the second at Calcutta edited by a European ex-member of Reuter's Indian staff, are the latest recruits to the field. It is difficult to predict anything about the future of the Moslem press in India. While it is bound to develop in the near future, it all depends whether it will tend to the fusion of communities and to the greater co-operation and cordiality among the main communities inhabiting the

land. The social and cultural ties of Indian Moslems with their fellow-citizens in this sub-continent may well be put forward by that press as making for that unity in the midst of diversity that the Hindu mind so likes to dwell upon. A genuine Moslem press, it may be affirmed, has functions to discharge in this country and cannot be a superfluity or a menace to the interests of the commonweal.

An Official Secrets Act was passed in the eighties, being the elaboration of a government measure taken during the reign of Lord Ellenborough in 1843. The law of sedition was amended in 1898. We have already seen the assurance given by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen: these were consistently ignored by the judiciary, and the country was shocked by the meaning attached to Sec. 124 A of the Penal Code in the case against Tilak. That extraordinary man, who was at once a portent, a menace and a prediction, who in his lifetime aroused as much hatred in certain circles as he inspired a supreme adoration in others, had in an incredible degree made himself the *bete noir* of the executive; and many of the battles of the freedom of the individual and the liberty of the Press were fought round him. Twenty years from our present date, others had also rushed into the field, mainly as the conse-

quence of the new movement in politics enunciated at Surat and the consequent spurt of renewed journalistic activity: and the executive had armed themselves with more exhaustive weapons that made the judges gasp and groan. Meanwhile Tilak's attitude towards the law, both as journalist and publicist, was simple. He did not care what the law of sedition was, how stringent its provisions or how recklessly the law was administered. But there must be finality in it: you cannot go on changing the interpretation to suit the varying needs of the hour as the executive sees it.

The story of the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* and Tilak's own dauntless struggles against the official corps, that well entitled him to be saluted as "the buoyant spirit of Indian nationalism", may well be followed in any one of a hundred books, and belongs properly to the history of the Indian struggle for emancipation. On his particular contribution to the advance of Indian journalism, here is what one of his biographers states:

"Mr. Tilak and the *Kesari* were convertible terms. Their careers have been synonymous with the history of Maharashtra during the last thirty years. It has been a period of storm and stress. It has witnessed a vast transformation and has been the era of action and

reaction—political and social. Through rocks and shoals, Mr. Tilak steered the *Kesari*, not caring for favour, nor afraid of frown, with a grim sense of duty. He was always bold, but uniformly wary. His is one long record of intellectual and moral intrepidity, sustained by breadth of vision and depth of insight. The *Kesari* has been a castle for national fight, reared under the very nose of the bureaucracy, proving impregnable even under the shells of repression. The style of Mr. Tilak's *Kesari* was, like the physiognomy of its illustrious editor, plain, blunt and aggressive. It was 'reason fused and made red-hot with passion.' It despised mere literary garnish and was the very negation of the soft suppleness of an intellectual epicurean. . . . It reminds you, not of a cloister or an academy, not of a music-hall or a ball-room, but of the battle-field. Straight, pointed, Mr. Tilak's written words arrow-like whistled through the air and hit the mark. They struck terror into the hearts of those who opposed him. . . . Mr. Tilak has been frequently blamed for his strong language. We must remember, however, that he was the centre of acute political and social controversies extending to over one generation. He could not be expected to rouse the masses to a sense of self-respect, self-reliance and self-confidence except by

pointed language. He, however, never hit below the belt. His criticism was impetuous but never vulgar, mean or vindictive. His instructions to his assistants reveal the secret of his direct but homely style. 'Imagine that you are speaking to a villager and not writing for university people. No Sanskrit words please. Avoid quoting statistics. Don't scare away the reader by quoting figures. Keep them to yourself. Let your style be simple and homely. It should be as clear as daylight. The meaning must never be obscure.' He was as good as his advice. True, in the early nineties, the *Kesari* was written in a more learned style. The exuberant scholarship of Mr. Tilak peeped through every column. Not a subject under the sun, but found its way into the *Kesari*. At a minute's notice he poured forth columns of wonderful learning, duly adorned with a literary setting. Religion, philosophy, economics, agriculture, astronomy, science—there was no subject too difficult for his pen or mind. He not only assimilated all the available knowledge on the subject in hand, but put his own stamp on it. His luminous and often original writings on knotty questions of philosophy or science are an intellectual treat and would repay a careful perusal even to-day." *

* D. V. Athalye: *Lokamanya Tilak*.

It is easy to see how Authority which detests in a publicist or a journalist the stern fibre of character was riled by a man of this height. The first of the Tilak prosecutions followed the unfortunate events at Poona on the outbreak of the plague in 1897. The Government, however, were not satisfied with the state of the law: though the presiding judge interpreted "disaffection" to mean "want of affection." In 1898, the law was amended so as to bring into its net even such criticism of the Government as did not advocate violence. A new section was added, making it a penal offence to foster enmity between classes of His Majesty's subjects. A system of personal security was instituted for preventing the dissemination of seditious matter. Finally district magistrates and magistrates of the first class were empowered to try cases of sedition.

An event of almost equal importance with the founding of the Congress was the establishment of the Associated Press. The story had best be told in the language of Pat Lovett:

In the old days before the Curzon Durbar of 1903, the three English-owned dailies of Calcutta maintained special correspondents at the head-quarters of the Government, their busiest time being when those head-quarters were at Simla. This was a tactic of self-

defence against the monopoly of the *Pioneer*. then to all intents and purposes the official organ. It was served by a capable journalist, Howard Hensman, who was *persona grata* to all the *deii majores*, civil and military. Hence it came about that the front page of the "Pi" was practically an official gazette, the contents of which were pirated and broadcast on publication. At Simla the "Englishman" was represented by A. J. Buck: the "Statesman" by Everard Coates, and the "Indian Daily News" by Mr. Dallas who depended for tit-bits from the departmental arcana on his Bengallee assistant, Mr. K. C. Roy, the cleverest news-ferret and scoopist Indian journalism has produced. He is much more now, but that is another matter.† Single-handed none of these pickers-up of unconsidered trifles was a match for Hensman: so it occurred to them to pool their resources to prevail against the common foe. Buck and Coates were the first directors of the Associated Press, with Roy a kind of maid-of-all-work. When the news agencies were organised in all the important cities in India, Roy demanded a directorship which was refused: he promptly cut away from his old moorings and started on his own with his faithful henchman, U. N. Sen. The Associated Press

† Mr. K. C. Roy died after these lines were written.

could not withstand the opposition of the Press Bureau (Indian News Bureau, as the correct name was) and the directors capitulated on the conditions imposed by Roy, who, they had to acknowledge, was the main-spring of the comprehensive machine. Later on Coates was bought out by Reuter, and now the foreign and domestic intelligence published by all the "live" dailies is supplied by the same agency which also enjoys a certain amount of State patronage and support. Recently a diminutive Richmond has appeared in the field to challenge its title. He flaunts a banner with the bold device, "Free Press." His success depends on the support he can get from the Indian nationalist papers which are more numerous than those English-owned, but not so wealthy. He is making a brave struggle against tremendous odds and if only as a corrective of the growing officialism of the older agency deserves to succeed. † The Associated Press has destroyed the old monopoly of the "Pioneer," but at the same time it has smothered original enterprise and adventure in news-getting both at Home and Abroad. . . . From this bare outline it is

† The Free Press of India has since ceased practically to serve as a news agency, having on the other hand entered the field of newspaper ownership. There is, however, the United Press, started at Calcutta.

not hard to appraise the influence of Mr. K. C. Roy on the development of the modern newspaper in India. He has never been an editor, nor, in spite of the important part he has taken in politics since the Montagu Reforms came into action, has he been a political writer of eminence ; nevertheless his instinct, it would be no exaggeration to call it genius, for the staple of news has proved a more potent factor in bringing Indian journalism up-to-date according to Western notions than any editor in the last forty years.*

Nothing much of importance remains to be chronicled till we reach the tremendously active years of the Curzon Viceroyalty. His intolerable insolence, the result partly of overweening self-assurance and partly of a restless activity, intended to drown acute personal disability apparently, had roused nationalism thoroughly and Bengal in particular ; and the agitation against the partition of that province gathered in force and in bitterness with the passing of time. The heroes of European revolutions began about this time to attract the attention of our youths, and there were exhibitions of impatience everywhere. Brodrick was succeeded in the India Office by John Morley, a life-long champion of liberal causes ; but once inside what he

* *Journalism in India.*

himself had styled the prison-house of White Hall, he began to entertain peculiar notions about the applicability east of Suez of ideas of political freedom and justice as held the mind of the more enlightened parts of the West. The result was a regime of repression with the hope of better things to come, that ultimately made their pitiful appearance in the shape of the Minto-Morley Reforms. Particular attention began to be paid to the Press which was then in the forefront of the nationalist agitation. In fact following the episodic disrapture of the Congress at Surat, in the early days of the Minto-Morley regime, the Indian Press had quietly begun to adopt a tone of great authority and of not a little menace to the Dogberrys of the great Service. Bipin Chandra Pal, with his weekly paper called the "New India," was in Bengal the prophet of this new school of self-reliance. He was soon out-distanced by the "Bande Mataram," and later the "Karmayogin," edited with singular literary force and brilliance by Aurobindo Ghose, one of the most elemental persons that were in that age attracted to the New Movement within the Congress. No greater force of intellect or character had before or ever after been placed at the service of Indian journalism. Aurobindo, before he sought the seclusion of French India, was the mighty in-

spirer of a new spirit in Indian journalism, giving a scholarly turn to the leading articles. He had won the classical tripos in Cambridge, and was almost the first to rise against what he called the cribbed, cabined and confined outlook of journalism in a subject country. He was master of a sonorous prose; and men everywhere eagerly read what he wrote: and even the exclusive columns of the London "Times" began to give long and elegant extracts from his thunders. But, at the same time, the eagerness of youth led to the cropping up of a number of newspapers like the "Yugantur," the "Sandhya" in Bengal, the "Rashtramath" and others in Bombay, the "India" in Madras and several others in the country that made no distinction between red-hot and passionate hatred of the foreigner and direct advocacy of Swaraj, a term that came into our political polemics at about the same time with a respectable parentage. So long as the new evangel was in the hands of men like Pal, Tilak and Aurobindo, it never overstepped the bounds of the law: though in one memorable article in the "Karmayogin," Aurobindo returned to the capital charge of the New Party against the Government, that their laws were unlawful: he spoke of lawless laws and suborned and perjured witnesses. It is no wonder that less expert

wielders of the powerful instrument relapsed into scurrillity and intemperate language. Terrorism stalked the land; and then were sown the seeds of a revolutionary movement that still provides its problems for the administrator. "Be the fault whose we will, ours or the Government's," wrote Aurobindo Ghose about this era, "the existence of an organised party of armed revolution in this country cannot be denied."

Under cover of combating terrorism, which made its appearance in places as far apart as London, Calcutta, Midnapur, Nasik and Tinnevely, the Government passed the Newspaper Act in 1908. In closing the debate on this measure, Minto foreshadowed the enactment of a General Press Act. It is unfair, said the Viceroy, that the people of India should depend upon unscrupulous caterers of literary poison for daily information, such as it is: and Lord Morley was seduced from the principles of a life time to assent to this Press Act of 1910.* Its provisions

* It must ever be a considerable detraction from Gokhale's prescience and statesmanship that he was one of those who stoutly supported this act. Towards the close of 1920, Lord Sinha referred before a Bombay audience to the belief widely held that he was responsible for the passing of the Act. Lord Sinha said that Gokhale "threatened that if (Sinha) resigned his position on that ground he would also resign his seat in the Council and never enter it." Commenting on this remarkable revelation, the "Tribune" wrote: "That Mr. Gokhale was partially responsible for the all but unanimous support which the measure received from

were all-comprehensive. It revived the Lytton idea of demanding security from the owners of presses and the publishers of newspapers. Only now there was no invidious distinction of race and race, language and language; all were impartially under the iron hoofs of the Press Act. (This was not so great a merit after all, as under the changing conditions induced by the national movement, the British Press in India had in most cases become a mere mouthpiece of the British garrison in the country.) Likewise there were provisions for the forfeiture of security under certain conditions. Against the order to furnish security no appeal lay: but a forfeiture order was to come under the scrutiny

the Indian members has been a matter of common knowledge. It is, we believe, well known that outside the Council also, he took an active interest in allaying opposition to the measure. It is within our knowledge, for instance, that he saw one of the foremost leaders of the Moderate Party in Bengal and tried to persuade him that in supporting the measure he was only doing the right thing. But this is the first time that we have learnt from so authoritative a source that Mr. Gokhale had something to do also with the abandonment by Lord Sinha of his intention of resigning his position as a protest against the introduction of the Press Act. . . . The nature of the wrong (Gokhale did his country) is undoubtedly intensified by the revelation just made. Had Lord, then Mr. Sinha really thrown up his position as he appears originally to have intended, we are perfectly certain that the moral value of that action would have been immense, and the Press Act, even if passed, would have been worked with far greater caution and moderation than has actually been the case."

of the High Court, when the aggrieved party appealed. In the debates on the subject much was made of this provision, which was supposed to mitigate the hardships of the measure and to guarantee reasonable freedom of discussion. This was flaunted as a great improvement on the Lytton Act, which provided for an appeal only to the Governor-General-in-Council. Anxious to show that they believed in the good faith of Morley the Moderates in the council voted for the measure. Gokhale was in favour of it. Only Malaviya and Basu fought to the last.

Very soon an incident happened which demonstrated in unmistakeable manner the illusory nature of the safeguards provided in the Act. Maulana Mohammed Ali appealed to the High Court of Calcutta against the order of the Bengal Government forfeiting under the Act a pamphlet entitled: "Come over into Macedonia and Help Us." This appeal was heard by a full bench, consisting of Sir Lawrence Jenkins, Chief Justice, Justices Woodroffe and Stephens. In the course of his judgment, Sir Lawrence, one of the most illustrious judges India has known, stated :

The provisions of Section 4 (describing the nature of the matter that can empower the government to pass a forfeiture order) are very

comprehensive and its language is as wide as human ingenuity can make it. Indeed it appears to me to embrace the whole range of varying degrees of assurance from certainty on the one side to the very limit of impossibility on the other. It is difficult to see to what lengths the operation of this section might not plausibly be extended by an ingenious mind. They may certainly extend to writings that may even command approval. An attack on that degraded section of the public which lives on the misery and shame of others would come under this widespread net: the praise of a class might not be free from risks. Much that is regarded as standard literature might undoubtedly be caught.....

The Advocate-General has admitted, and as I think very properly, that the pamphlet is not seditious and does not offend against any section of the Criminal Law of India. But he has contended, and rightly, in my opinion, that the provisions of the Press Act extend far beyond the criminal law; and he has argued that the burden of proof is cast on the applicant so that, however meritorious the pamphlet may be, still, if the applicant cannot establish the negative that the Act requires, his application must fail. And what is this negative? It is not enough for the applicant to show that the

words of the pamphlet are not likely to bring into hatred or contempt any class or section of His Majesty's subjects in British India or that they have not a tendency in fact to bring about that result. But he must go further and show that it is impossible for them to have this tendency directly or indirectly, and whether by way of inference, suggestion, allusion, metaphor or implication. Nor is this all; for we find that the legislature has added that all-embracing phrase "otherwise."

The Act was directed against crime and aimed at its prevention. I doubt whether publications with an authorship, a source and a purpose like those of the present pamphlet were thought of: and I remember the force of the argument that the Act is now applied to a purpose never intended. But be that so or not, if the legislature has employed language wide enough to cover the pamphlet, this lack of reserve affords no answer to the forfeiture now attacked.

The Advocate-General has convinced me that the Government's view of this piece of legislation is correct, and that the Court's powers of intervention are the narrowest. Its power to pronounce on the legality of the forfeiture by reason of failure to observe the mandatory conditions of the Act is barred: the ability to

pronounce on the wisdom of the executive order is withheld: and its functions are limited to considering whether the applicant has discharged the almost hopeless task of establishing that his pamphlet does not contain words which fall within the all-comprehensive provisions of the Act. I describe it as an almost hopeless task, because the terms of Section 4 are so wide that it is scarcely conceivable that any publication would attract the notice of Government in this connection to which some provision of this section might not "directly or indirectly, whether by inference, suggestion, allusion, metaphor, implication or otherwise" apply..... Therefore the jurisdiction to pronounce on the wisdom or unwisdom of executive action has been withheld and rightly withheld: it may be questioned whether even the semblance which this Act provides should not have been withheld as it was by Act IX of 1878. . . . And what then is the conclusion of the whole matter? Of the two alleged checks on executive action supposed to be furnished by the Act, one, the intervention of the Court, is ineffectual, while the other, for this very reason, can be, and in this case has been disregarded, without impairing the practical effect of the forfeiture purporting to be under the Act. . . . Mr. Mohammed Ali has lost his book, but

retained his character : and he is free from the stigma he apprehended. . . . I think there should be no order as to costs."

The Press Act, as interpreted in the foregoing Judgment, which long was the *locus classicus* on the subject, is seen in its true colours. The function of the High Court, which was supposed to scrutinise the doings of the executive with a jealous eye, appears to consist, as Mr. K. Vyasa Rao put it at the time,* in comparing the words mentioned by the government with the words appearing in the paper, and seeing whether the same words are found in the same places !

If the mentality behind the devising of such an Act appears to us to be arbitrary, we were soon to receive a shock. When the Great War broke out, it became necessary to woo the people of India. And for a brief while the Indian Press was treated as if it were a respectable thing. In the early days of the War, Indian leaders placed full confidence in the good faith of the British Government ; and only later on did they realise that a loyal acceptance of the Government's critical posture and the withholding of embarrassing criticism were liable to be misinterpreted as the lack of a desire

*See his excellent brochure, *The Press under the Press Act*, which is still not out of date.

for political advancement. In the hey-day of the Home Rule agitation, conducted with that one-pointed energy of hers by Dr. Besant, the *New India* * received the kind attention of the authorities. But on the whole the war patched up an artificial and unstable truce between the Government and the Press, which was broken at the earliest opportunity. But not before Montagu, who had by then come on the scene, repealed the Morley-Minto Press Act, and gave the Press its freedom for a short period of eight years. The result of the Great War on national life was profound. It increased the national consciousness and gave us an international outlook: and all this was reflected in the

* The *Madras Standard* was the first among Indian newspapers in Madras to aim at brightness and enterprise. It had, first under Mr. G. Subbramania Iyer and later under that genius, Mr. G. Parameswaram Pillai, "a trait which characterises some of the successful newspapers in England." Evil days fell on it, and in 1915 it passed into the capable hands of Dr. Besant, who threw herself into the Home Rule agitation. It was the first among Indian newspapers to attain the 10,000 mark in its circulation; and probably no newspaper editor carried out his or her duties with that same unwearying industry and regard for the least little detail as Dr. Besant; for not a line went into the paper without her satisfying herself about it. After seventeen strenuous years of undaunted fight for the people, it ceased publication in the year 1933. Yet, such is the camaraderie in Madras Journalism, no newspaper thought it worth while to commemorate the passing away of a one-time stout-hearted fighter in the popular cause, whose buoyancy, energy and persistence were truly marvellous.

Press, all sections of it. The Press Act was revived first in 1930, and again in 1932 in an even more stringent form than Lytton or Adam thought necessary, with the ostensible purpose of combating civil disobedience, terrorism, safeguarding the interests of Indian princes or foreign potentates.

We shall be wanting in a measure of completeness were we to pass over the weeklies and the monthly reviews in India. The weekly Press of India, though the oldest as being the pioneer in journalistic venture, has everywhere paled before the daily newspaper. And for some very cogent reasons. The Sunday newspapers, as we know them to-day, were hardly possible of being visualised in the days of our journalistic non-age; even at the present day we have hardly a single Sunday newspaper amongst us worth the name, though there are many aspirants to fill the role. A weekly review lives by the weight of its views and its literary contents. We have seen how even in England, where there is such a general diffusion of education, the weekly Press could not long support itself. It is not surprising that in India, where we have yet to create a leisured class interested in things of the mind and with a heavy enough purse to patronise such literature, the weekly and the monthly press are in

a sad state of dilapidation. Only to-day, we come across a paper like *The Times of India 'Illustrated Weekly'* that certainly seems to have "struck oil." It was for long the only one of its kind. Recently, the "*Hindu*" of Madras has changed its illustrated weekly on the lines of the British Sunday newspapers, an experiment that will be watched with interest. Apart from this, the weeklies in India may be numbered on one's fingers. Malabari long ago founded the "*Indian Spectator*"; but at no time was it a power in the general politics of the country; firstly because he never wore the label of party, and secondly because he was a reformer in disguise, dwelling on the imperfections of his people: and he was content to do service—and what a service it was!—to causes in which he believed and which still desiderate willing workers. Tilak's "*Kesari*" holds its ground, though it has since been converted into a bi-weekly and has a phenomenal circulation. It has had the rare good fortune of finding extremely competent men to captain it over a fairly long span of time. "*The Mahratta*," Tilak's English weekly, still persists and is held in warm affection by the community to whom it caters. The competition between the "*Statesman*" and the "*Englishman*" led to the latter's absorption by the former, followed by its ap-

pearance as a weekly and then by its final extinction after more than a century of stout battle in the anti-Indian interest. The "Indian Social Reformer," originally run from Madras, and later removed to the more congenial surroundings of Bombay, is still edited by Mr. K. Natarajan. The "Servant of India," the organ of the Society of that name, has been noted for the sanity of its views on the problems of the day. The "People" of Lahore, originally founded by that lion-hearted publicist, Lala Lajpat Rai, and known for its advocacy of a sort of socialism, has now been converted into a daily. The "Young India" of Mahatma Gandhi, with its Gujarati counterpart, was devoted exclusively to the Mahatma's views on the subjects of the day and on issues that travelled farther than mundane interest, and had a vogue that was unparalleled in the history of weekly reviews. It was the only newspaper that disdained advertisements. When Pat Lovett was alive, his *Diary of a Ditcher* in "Capital" used to attract enormous attention: it had immense popularity.

We have not in India monthly periodicals of the character of the 'Strand' or the 'Pearson's Monthly'. But there are not wanting serious-minded journals of the type of the *Fortnightly* or the *Nineteenth Century and After*. The

“Hindusthan Review,” which has ever been noted for its critical book-reviews and earnest and persistent advocacy of all wise reform in the spheres of politics and life widely interpreted, was founded in 1900. Ramananda Chatterjee’s “Modern Review” will leap to the mind in this connection ; though it is doubtful if it sustains in these days its earlier brilliance. In Madras there is the “Indian Review” of Mr. G. A. Natesan. The shedding of the editorial notes, which were such a prominent and attractive feature of its opening years, written with a manly independence of judgment and crispness of phrase, obviously has not affected its circulation and usefulness. It has had a large share in interpreting Madras opinion to the leisured classes outside the presidency. The Ramakrishna Mission is issuing two monthlies, the “Prabuddha Bharatha,” which acquired a great reputation in the days of the editorship of the gifted Rajam Iyer, and the “Vedanta Kesari,” started more than a decade ago to replace the defunct “Brahmavadin.” Later still Ramakotiswara Rao, with rare persistence and courage, has ventured forth with the “Triveni,” published once in two months, and intended to represent the Indian renaissance in its various aspects. It is a courageous battle he is waging with the Philistines.

The manysided advance of the nation in these days has called forth weekly newspapers catering to special interests. Finance and insurance have a number of important organs, not all of them Indian-owned though. Sports alone has not been able to maintain a newspaper of its own; and one or two attempts fizzled out. The cinema has a respectable crop of newspapers. While, in the southern presidency, they seem to specialise in a sort of humorous monthlies. The vernacular Press of India has thrown up quite a large number of respectable monthlies and weeklies and many of them have bright and promising careers before them if they will follow the advice Tilak used to give his assistants on the *Kesari*.

CHAPTER V

THE GATHERING OF NEWS

Take a daily paper. Before you set it down, you have travelled right round the world, lingering over those places where all the interesting things take place, and skipping swiftly over those where the dull and uninteresting and uninspiring routine of daily life is being led. This is the secret of the newspaper's fascination. The bounds of our life are being widened, and we feel for the moment in imaginative accord with the ceaseless flow of the stream of History. But we do not get it mystically. Showmen have to conduct us on our daily tour, and demonstrate to us how the great wheel of the world is turned. Every bit of news may represent, for those who gathered it, a tiny adventure.

In the last resort the men who hunt for the news are the mainstay of the newspapers. To-day most of the news is sent to the offices of the important dailies by news agencies; but behind the news agency is the news gatherer. He gets all the romance and the excitement of it, and the reader may perhaps be favoured with a

second-hand experience of the adventure, or perhaps not. For the secret of news-gathering, which varies with each individual, is not to be lightly divulged. The late C. E. Montague once explained the eternal fascination of the journalist's profession. "Or is it simply," he asks, "that the details of the life (of a journalist) have an endless day-to-day variety? One journalist, I know, has not found any two days of his work alike in thirty years. Every night he has felt, when he entered his office, as if he were untying some curious parcel that looks good, come from Heaven knows where. What letters would there be, lying upstairs on his table? To what country, new to himself, might there be orders to go, to Ireland or Abyssinia, to a theatre or a war? With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour to his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were all to set all abuzz at daylight with the news."*

The news-hunter, or reporter as we may call him, feels at first hand the actual stir of existence. And by sorting and choosing, controlled by law and prudence and, it may be policy, he gives the world what it may safely know. And this work is astonishingly varied. Political correspondents have to filch from dip-

* Oliver Elton : *C. E. Montague, A Memoir*.

lomats trained in all the arts of evasion what they may be doing their best to hide. Fashion experts have to follow that most elusive of things, feminine whims and caprices, season after season. Descriptive writers have to take at once a thousand impressions of a great event, and let their readers feel more of the spectacle than they would have done with their untrained senses. Occasionally perhaps some one has the excitement of following a human trail in the hot chase after a criminal. All the world over, on all aspects of life, news-gatherers are turning their high-powered searchlights hour by hour and communicate to the waiting world the pick of their spoils. There is certainly romance in the world for news-gatherers, also the fatal lure to cynicism.

War has ever been a windfall to the news-gatherer. An accomplished journalist, one of the founders of the *Daily Mail*, has told us that war is the foremost of the topics that are the best sellers for a newspaper. War "not only creates a supply of news, but a demand for it." The Crimean War according to Mr. Kennedy Jones, gave to the *Times* phenomenal prosperity and prestige, and was an ultimate cause of the creation of the penny daily. The Indian Mutiny enabled the *Standard* to reduce its price to a penny. In the Franco-Prussian War the circula-

tion of the 'Daily Telegraph' rose from 50,000 to over 1,000,000, while the Great War restored the *Times* to all its prosperity and prestige. Conversely, a war always plays on the passions of the populace, and makes it impossible for newspapers to thrive that do not pander to them. Mr. R. H. Gretton points out how "under the pressure of competition two Liberal penny papers had first of all reduced their price to a half-penny, and then, finding themselves still hard-pressed, had largely waived their opposition to the Boer War." In Great Britain only three prominent newspapers stood unflinchingly by opposition to war; and each of them had peculiar merits that made it indispensable for the classes for whom it catered.

The reporting of war is a special art in itself, and only a few journalists have come unscathed through the ordeal. But war correspondence to day is not what it was in the days of Crabbe Robinson and William Russel; because, for one thing modern warfare is an extremely complex affair, apart from its incidental horror on a scale undreamt-of of old, in which the distinction between the soldier and the civilian wears very thin indeed; and because, again, the war correspondent is no longer a free and independent spectator and critic. Not armies alone but whole nations are to-day engaged in

the shock of conflict ; and the enthusing of the civilian is as much important as the chronicling of the field of carnage and the progress of operations. Falsehood in war reports is by no means a modern invention, as those will remember who have read their Haji Baba of Ispahan. Both the technique of war correspondence and the initiative of the correspondent have undergone quite surprising changes in these days. Mr. Henry William Nevinson, himself a master of this difficult art, has recently told us how the great change came about in the Franco-Prussian War.

There happened to be a man called Archibald Forbes, said Nevinson, who went strolling along the German line, and then in the French lines, and then went back to Fleet Street and wrote several columns, handed in at an office, and then walked out. The editor ran after him and asked him if he would go back and write some more. "You must telegraph every word," he said, "columns of it." And after that it became impossible to send war news except by telegraph, and without a censorship for fear that the messages might go to the enemy. Mr. Nevinson spoke of the difficulties shared by the correspondents of later times, drawing on his experiences in the Greek and the South African wars. In the early days of the Great War the

mandarins who controlled the Allied front failed to realise the enormous value of publicity, and banned journalists from the field of operations. Lord Kitchener, who had inherited from Lord Wolseley a detestation of Press correspondents, would not allow them a chance. Twelve were chosen, but they were all cooped up in London. Nevinson went further afield and wrote about the "heroic and tragic campaign of the Dardenelles." By and by he came back to France. As is shown in *A Modern History of the English People*, "the strictness which had kept all accounts of the fighting to the official eye-witness had broken down; and the newspapers had been allowed to send their correspondents to France. They had not the romantic chances of the old-time war correspondent. They were brigaded, as it were, in a chateau reserved for them, did their work under supervision, and saw just as much of the Front or its near neighbourhood as the authorities permitted. But at least they could introduce a variety and vividness of their own into the war story; and as time went on they saw more and more of the real thing." And it was not always easy: Macnaire Wilson tells us how he travelled incognito to the front in an ambulance train, was reprimanded and sent back to Paris in consequence.

But with no war on, news generally consists of crime and sport, social and political scandal, in their legitimate and in their extravagant forms. Crime has a way of advertising itself ; but it is always possible to get a "crime exclusive." Generally the reporter describes the scene of the crime, and makes a striking story of it. Frequently, even against the dictates of good taste, he does not scruple to photograph the places or persons concerned in any manner with the crime: and what is even worse, he will not hesitate to interview the widow or daughter of a murdered man, and ask her theory about the grim event. Sometimes, but rarely, you may get a man like Roger Sheringham, the sleuth reporter whom Anthony Berkeley has introduced in some delightful detective stories, chasing elusive criminals. But most of the work of crime detection appears to be far from interesting, where it does not positively interfere with the legitimate functions of the police in tracking the criminal. Yet readers of newspapers are time and again provided with thrills of a hunt after some absconding criminal, who has cleverly hidden his traces. It may be remarked that an increasing tendency in the Press is to take out of the legitimate hands of the police the clues and correlation of facts. The most notable early

example of this tendency to exploit crime as a saleable thing by the English Press was the elaborate and unrestrained investigations in connection with the murder of a woman in Yarmouth in 1900. The murderer was afterwards caught with the help of a laundry mark! The notorious Crippen case was another example, when after pursuing its ordinary course in the newspapers for about ten days, suddenly, on July 25, 1910, the *Daily Telegraph* published the amazing news that the captain of a steamer on the way to Canada had sent a wireless message stating that he believed himself to have the missing couple on board. As a historian of those years says: "Not one savour of this incredibly dramatic turn of events was lost. Instead of the meagre fare of carefully doled-out clues, and the more or less blind interest in the case, here was the whole nation behind the scenes, watching (this was the thrill of the piece) those two fugitives in mid-ocean, and they, to whom alone it was life and death, alone unaware that they were already discovered."* The most sensational scoop in relation to crime detection was landed by the *New York World* in 1891. Some one, attempting to throw a bomb at Russel Sage, was literally hoist with his own petard; blown to smithereens as he was, no one could

* R. H. Gretton *A Modern History of the English People.*

expect to succeed in recognising him. A reporter of the *World*, visiting the scene of the tragedy, chanced to see a button with an adhering piece of cloth. He took it and examined it attentively. The button had a Boston tailor's name. The reporter took the next train to Boston, visited the tailor, and learnt after some difficulty that a suit of material that matched with the sample in his hand had been recently made for a young stock-broker of the name of Noaoss, who had since disappeared. The *World*, on receiving the news from the reporter, sponsored the hypothesis that this was the unknown assailant. So it proved to be.

Political news or political gossip is another important bill of fare in our newspapers. It is a work that requires tact in a very great degree. Sometimes politicians are anxious for publicity and pay ostentatious court to the reporter. More frequently and always in times of political excitement, they are for hiding the news; and the reporter has his work cut out for him in ferreting out the news. He is involved in deciding casuistical questions of honour; for the journalist has to respect the confidence of the informant, and yet discharge his duty to the newspaper and the public to whom it caters. One has often to build a story from a mere hint, or a whispered innuendo, and most often in the

nick of time; for news loses its savour in a very few seconds. Most unlikely sources of news have to be cultivated; for one never knows what clod of earth may not conceal a rich vein of gold. Perhaps it is necessary now and then to employ codes in telegrams and thus get past the political censors. The elusive hunt after political scandal is a most attractive and most hazardous occupation, and requires infinite tact and diplomacy, equal measure of honesty and constructive imagination.

One of the most curious developments of the New Journalism is its social gossip columns—a feature worked to the death in the west, and slowly invading this country. Divorces naturally excite a good deal of attention. Small talk about the parties and picnics of the so-called leaders of fashion seems to be even more attractive. The art of the social paragraphist is a difficult one. He has to know a good many people, with whose movements he has to keep in touch; and he has to dispense his daily dose of scandal in the most good-humoured manner without sinning against the law or the conventions. It is symbolic of the essential snobbery of the masses that wealth and title should lure them on to column after column of small beer. In Lowes Dickinson's *After Two Thousand Years* Philaethes tells Plato: "Since they

(the poor) cannot be rich themselves (though even that may hover as a dream over them), the next best thing they feel is to have rich men to look at, to bet on their sports, gossip about their vices and admire their women."

The social small talk is closely allied to the women's page. That women have special interests from that of men was a new and startling discovery to journalists. But they have not advanced very much farther from this discovery. Their typical women readers seem to be moving to and fro among the gay diversions of Society with a capital S, and to be perpetually interested in the latest Parisian modes. Housewives sometimes get useful hints; but the main pre-occupations of women appear to be dress and dinner. The Indian Press has only very recently taken to this feature: one vernacular paper publishing a weekly causerie relating to jewelry, and an English daily devoting attention to sundry topics always chosen at random.

Closely connected with the women's page is the children's corner, full of the adventures of Teddy Tail or Reynard the Fox or some such character in whom the children are supposed to take interest: and frequently they seem to do so. Northcliffe seems to have found this from personal experience. It requires a great talent

to enter into the child's imagination and provide for its aesthetic needs. Sometimes it is done; but it is not surprising that very often it is a wishy-washy sort of thing.

Then there come the sports columns, which so interest the man in the street, and have in recent years come to absorb a very large amount of space in even the indigenous press. The sports reporter is expected to capture for the reader all the thrills of the game. The ordinary spectator is generally unaccustomed to sort out his impressions or get in his mind a coherent picture of the complete game. Thus it is often the case he wants to read about what he has seen. The reporter has to be meticulously accurate in supplying the reader with an unified and attractive description of the affair which to him is but a welter of impressions, no doubt vivid at the moment but soon fading before every subsequent impression left by the course of the game and its fortunes. Gambling is certainly among the most popular forms of sport, in any one of its manifold aspects. And about the eighties, the newspapers began to give betting tips on races and to conduct competitions about the winners in Cup Finals and county championships. Sports was certainly one of the discoveries of the late 19th century journalism; and whether philosophers give it a

high place in their scale of values or no, it holds and retains an overwhelming share of readers. The influx of cheap newspapers however sensibly modified ideas of sport. A famous old cricketer, to cite an instance, writing to the *Times* as long ago as September 5, 1887, complained of a new school of cricket reporting which classified counties into first and second class counties and talked of "championships" and "premierships"; the cricket enthusiast, he thought, was becoming a mere statistician, with "records" at his fingers' ends. Since then we have had the football mania and the racing bets, all evidently the work of the same spirit.

There is the magazine page to be considered yet. Specialists on various subjects are asked to contribute to the newspaper articles which will be easily understood. At times, however, the desire to have well-known names on the contents bill as contributors leads to amusing extravagances. A film star very much in the public eye may be allowed to air his or her views on any subject from shoes to sealing wax, even, as happened in one instance, on so serious and complicated a subject as the World Economic Crisis. Talking points are pursued with avidity, and discussions started on all sorts of subjects. Northcliffe once told his News Editor "There are two main divisions of news: one

actualities, two, talking points. The first is news in its narrowest sense—reports of happenings, political resignations, crime, deaths of famous people, wrecks and railway smashes, weather storms, sporting results and so on. The second is getting the topics people are discussing and developing them, or stimulating a topic oneself. . . . News of the first sort is easy to recognise and comparatively easy to obtain if you have an efficient organisation and a highly-trained and well-paid staff. . . . News of the second sort, the talking points, the features, is news that does not fall into your basket like the other sort. It requires thought, initiative, looking ahead. It means a daily search by trained men of the world, directed by a news leader who has time to get about among men and women, and time to think—a daily search for subjects in the public mind, or subjects that ought to be in the public mind. It is hard news that catches the readers, features hold them.” *

At times when a sufficiently important event turns up, it is covered by a special correspondent, chosen from the staff itself or from outside by reason of some special quality discernible in the correspondent so chosen and by reason of the infinite variety of issues the event

* Tom Clarke: *My Northcliffe Diary*.

may raise. Originally war provided opportunities for special correspondents. William Howard Russel for instance reported the Crimean War and the Sepoy Mutiny for the *Times*. But to-day owing to the shortening of distance and the increasing knowledge of countries and their inter-dependence, occasions for the special correspondentship arise much more frequently; though it is very doubtful if the modern Special Correspondent has the freedom, the opportunity and the drive of the earlier one. More than was the case in the previous century, we have to-day a number of international events requiring the attention of the Special Correspondent. In our own country, such occasions have been abundant in recent years. The conversion of the American, Miss Nancy Miller, to Hinduism and all the events leading to and following it gave the Press of the western presidency occasion to employ special correspondents, for the first time outside the annual sessions of the Congress. And half the papers of the World sent representatives to the famous March to Dandi that Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated at the commencement of his campaign against the salt laws. The Round Table Conference in London was almost the first occasion when Indian newspapers thought it their business to engage Special Correspondents abroad; and in

the Second Conference, the *Hindu* of Madras and the *Free Press of India* sent their own representatives from this country. The Special Correspondent is allowed a certain amount of latitude in the selection and presentation of his news which is not extended to the ordinary reporter. Among the well-known Special Correspondents was Blowitz, who long represented the *Times* in Paris, "a large pompous man, who dominated assemblies of the great." These men have practically editorial functions assigned to them. This may easily land the newspaper in impossible situations: but on the whole it is a credit to the profession that such occasions have been less than they might have been.

The collection of news is so complicated, intricate and expensive a matter, requiring the co-operation of so many individuals and the exercise of qualities never found in conjunction in the same individual, that it is not a matter of surprise that from newspapers should have been evolved the news agencies. These latter are to-day of various character, catering to different tastes and areas. One of the most important is Reuters Agency, originally founded in 1849 and using carrier pigeons for the dispatch of commercial news between Brussels and Aix-la-Chapelle. Soon after the first cable was laid between Dover and Calais, Reuter became a

naturalised British subject, set up his headquarters in London, 1851, and converted the business into a limited liability company. Though for a time the importance of such a body was not recognised, the *Times* began to publish news from this Agency regularly from the year 1885, when Reuters supplied it with a telegraphic report of a speech by Napoleon III. During the War Reuters became a completely British concern. It is a great news agency and has a practical monopoly of news in the East. It covers oriental affairs for half the world, and presents day by day a kaleidoscopic view of world affairs, though rather from the British point of view. It cannot be called an absolutely impartial news purveyor, but is very efficient and has done Great Britain excellent service. The other important agency in England is a co-operative one, the Press Association, founded in 1868, though it began to work only on February 5, 1870, on which date the telegraph system passed into state control in Britain. A Press Association message was the first to be sent over the Government wires. The Association serves nearly 150 provincial journals in addition to London newspapers, while outside the metropolis it has the monopoly for the distribution of Reuters' news. It purchased and absorbed the London News Agency in 1919.

There are others besides, the Central News, the Exchange Telegraph Company, the National Press Agency, to mention but a few.

There are many news agencies on the continent of Europe, of which the principal is the Havas Agency, founded in 1825 by Charles Havas, a journalist who specialised in translations from foreign newspapers. His son, Augustus Havas, converted it into a joint stock concern on July 24, 1879. There are also the Russian Official Tass Agency and the Wolff Bureau in Germany, the Stefani agency in Italy ; in Spain the Febra agency ; in Denmark, the Ritz Bureau and so on. The American Associated Press is perhaps the greatest co-operative undertaking in the world of commerce. In the year 1848, the publishers of competing New York dailies agreed to procure news of a certain kind for common use at common expense. Papers in different parts of the country sent local news in exchange for other news. The New York Associated Press soon had representatives all over the country and many newspapers became members or bought news from it. Rival associations also sprang up, but finally in 1892 the A.P. became national in scope. It is in close contact with foreign news agencies. It is not a profit-making concern ; its stock is held by many persons, none of whom may hold more

than eight shares and each of whom must be the proprietor of a paper which agrees to turn its news into the common pool for the use of members in other towns.

While more and more the tendency is for news to be gathered by organised agencies of a limited number and broadcast throughout the world from a central station, it is doubtful if outside India we can see the spectacle of the newspapers being indebted to a syndicate for the greater part of their news supply. *Pari passu* with the growth of the modern newspaper, we have had the growth of various reporting agencies, which specialise in sports, and others which deal with the supply of various features that go to make up the modern newspaper. Nor should we forget the organisations that confine themselves to illustrations and photographs for the daily and the weekly Press.

In this game of gathering news, there is owing to the modern conditions all the excitement of the chase and the desire to be in at the kill, so to say, in advance of every one else. Not merely as between news agencies, but between individual newspapers there is a keen competition. To be first with the news has always been the journalist's ideal. And with the wide net of cables and telegraphs that cover the modern world, not to speak of wireless

stations, it is possible to know and communicate the news with almost miraculous swiftness. Yet there is scope still left for the reporter's intuition, tact and sleuthlike instinct in ferreting out news. Because, after all is said and done, news has to be hunted down like any beast of the field; it is not enough to sense it from afar off or to recognise it when it thrusts itself on one's notice. It is always possible to get "scoops"—to be first with the news and make all your rivals green with envy. It all depends on the enterprise, the resourcefulness, and, let it not be forgotten, on the standing and integrity of the correspondent or the news agency.

Instinct, intuition or flair or a keen scent for news may enable a journalist to land a scoop, of which an oft-told example is Delane's announcement of a successor to Lord Mayo in the viceroyalty of India. It is worth repeating here. Mr. Delane was a great diner-out. One day he met at dinner Sir William Gull, then the leading physician of London. There was a discussion at table upon the effect of climate on constitutions. "By the way," Sir William said, "Lord Northbrook was asking me to-day whether I thought the climate of India would suit him." The subject dropped, no more was said. Mr. Delane drove straight to the *Times* office, and the paper next morning an-

nounced Lord Northbrook's appointment to the viceroyalty. His sole authority was this casual remark at dinner. Lord Northbrook, who was then Under-Secretary for War, had not been mentioned as a possible candidate for the post. To name him was something more than a splendid guess: it was an act of courage which success justified. A scoop, foiled at the last moment by the resourcefulness of a rival, is related in Diblee's *Newspaper*. William Howard Russel was detailed by the *Times* to cover O'Connell's trial at Dublin in 1844. He returned, ages ahead of his rivals, in a specially chartered steam-packet. At the entrance to the *Times* office were a number of men in shirt-sleeves, whom Russel took for compositors in his office. One of them touched his hat and greeted Russell with "We are glad that O'Connell was found guilty at last." "Oh, yes," replied Russell cordially, "All guilty but on different counts." The man in shirt sleeves was the emissary of the *Morning Herald*. In truth he had bearded the lion in its own den. There are numerous historic scoops which created an unforgettable impression when they first appeared. The *Reynolds News*, for instance, got hold of the news of King Edward's serious illness before the Coronation, which made it necessary to postpone the date of the ceremony by a few months. At first the

disappointed rivals accused the *News* of indulging in scare rumours for the sake of sensation. An even more famous instance was the reporting of the mutiny of British officers at the Curragh by the *Daily Mail*. The entire story, an example of the readiness and comprehensiveness with which news is followed to its end, can be read from the pen of one of the chief men who brought off the scoop. The message came to the *Daily Mail* not from the scene of the revolt, but from a far-away Essex village; and the reader should go to Tom Clarke's *My Northcliffe Diary* to find out how they exploited all possible sources of information, before they had "four columns all to ourselves; and ere our rivals read the news next day our special correspondents had been ordered to proceed to Ireland for what looked like war."

The well-known Irish correspondent, Andrew Dunlop, relates in his reminiscences many stories of the scoops he had bought off. Once he engaged a special train to the scene of a double murder, and left his rivals far behind. A favourite device of his for blocking the lines was to hand over slightly varied accounts of the same event. Once he actually walked over to the operator's table and quietly added from time to time fresh pages to his own despatch

handed in some time earlier. Yet another historic scoop may be recalled. During the peace negotiations after the Boer War, daily reports were published only by the *Daily Mail*. As the Government had decided to ban the Press from the Conference, this was a matter for wonder. Actually some one inside the Conference signalled to some one outside (though the ethics of doing so is highly questionable) the progress of the negotiations; and the results were cabled to England with the aid of a special code by which they seemed to be merely reports of commercial intelligence about the diamond market.

The conditions obtaining in India being what they are, it would seem that the scope for scoops is extremely limited. And before we close this chapter it may be well to recall the only incident in the reporting side of the profession in this country that can be called a scoop. When in 1929 Mahatma Gandhi went to Calcutta and burnt foreign clothes there, he was arrested sometime in the early morning. The premier news agency of the country was not able to get at the news while the Free Press of India flashed it all over the country. The only other reporter who was able to get the news was the local correspondent of the *Bombay Times of India*.

All told, the reader who has travelled so far will agree, the life of the news hunter is full of that vivid uncertainty which is the joy of adventure. And the scoop-mongers are within reason the salt of the profession.

CHAPTER VI

THE REPORTER— HIS QUALIFICATIONS AND WORK

Alike the news agency and the newspaper depend on the reporter. He is the unseen cog which keeps the machine going, the tentacles by which, to vary the metaphor, the daily press combs the world. Most people, when thinking of the reporter, conjure up the vision of an inquisitive young man, with a pen and a notebook scrawled with the mysterious hieroglyphics of some shorthand system or other. This is by no means a correct picture. An American journalist of great experience has gone to the extent of saying that the knowledge of shorthand may be a hindrance rather than a help in the work of the reporter. For, the modern reporter is expected to hunt news, and not merely to take *verbatim* reports of dull speeches. And being a shorthand man, if he should concentrate on reporting the *ipsissima verba* of the speakers at a meeting, he may quite likely fail to notice the drama thereat—the interplay of thought and emotion between the speaker and the audience, the play of the speaker's features,

the boos and the catcalls, the plaudits and the panegyrics; his report however accurate would lose the human touch, while another, giving but the most important sentiments of every speaker in terms and words but concentrating on the dramatic elements of the situation, may score a clear victory.

As a matter of fact the reporter is half born and half made. "The bases of success in journalism," says Henry Walterson,* "are good habits, good sense and good feeling, a good education, particularly in the English branches, and application both constant and cheerful." Mental alertness, the ability to seize the significance of a situation at a glance, the capacity to size up fellow human beings at a moment's notice, the genius for synthetic vision—these qualities must be inborn. Much may depend on the use to which these qualities are put, and that is where the hard school of training comes in. It is the fashion today to have schools of journalism, but it is doubtful if they can do any good. It is said that some American schools give excellent training both in theory and practice, but most authorities are of opinion that the only school of journalism is the hard school of

* Quoted by Edwin Schuman in his *Practical Journalism*. These and other extracts from the book are given by permission of the publishers, D. Appleton and Co., New York.

experience. The reporter fairly passes his examination every day: every event that he reports is a practical test of his quality. In no other profession perhaps do tact and adaptability to circumstances contribute so much to success: There are lessons for a reporter that no school can teach, and that must be learnt amid the frowns of editors, the ridicule of the more experienced and much frankness about the size of his hat or the greenness of his head. Innumerable people want the journalist's help, for either suppression of the truth, or the suggestion of falsehood; and he must know when to ask for and keep a confidence, and when bluntly to refuse. He may be constantly called upon to decide between the claims of his paper and the appeals of his victim.

He must have a workable knowledge of human nature, and must know how to use the pump-handle. Bluff with one, appeal with another, cajolery or threats with a third—the arts are as infinite as there are differences among men. And he must master the subtle and difficult art of interviewing, one of the most important features of the modern newspaper. A note-book and a pencil may frighten the quarry, who might otherwise be willing to talk freely. If you are a reporter you must have a tenacious memory, and make a mental note as the

speaker pours his views into your receptive ears. Get a few leading questions and direct the course of the interview yourself. Note the speaker's mannerisms, and while your head is full of the subject, write on a report bringing out the most striking points in the first few lines. Or it may be you have to cover a big event—a riot in a political convention, a sudden wreck, accident or a big fire. You must know whom and how to ask the necessary questions, and while gathering the information you must write dispatch after dispatch to your office. Always a keen wide-awake attitude, alertness of mind and quickness of work will carry the reporter far. The qualities needed for a successful reporter, are thus, in the main, the qualities needed for success in any other exacting profession.

One of the essential things that a reporter must early imbibe is the necessity of getting a story quickly into the office. Also he must get it accurately with names, dates, statistics checked, wherever these are necessary. The sub-editor in the office is usually overburdened with copy, and, because, a reporter's event is not due at the office till a particular hour, it is no reason why it should be delayed up to the minute. The reporter who cultivates this habit of handing in his copy early and accurate will

find that he is on the fair way to recognition and promotion to the higher rungs of the ladder. The second thing the reporter ought to bear in mind is that, however much the sub-editor may grumble at long copy, he will be grateful for lengthy reports, as in the process of summarising he would be sure not to leave out the essential points of the story. No sub-editor will tell the reporter so in so many words; for condensation is the key to sub-editorial success; and the reporter is always cautioned to cut his story short. Yet a third thing the reporter should be careful about is that he should always keep in touch with the office. There are a number of excellent reasons why, now and again during the hunt for news, the reporter should telephone his news editor. Some new developments might have occurred which may make it either unnecessary for him to prolong his particular investigation, or the trail may change, or new matter bearing on his enquiries might have come into the office through another channel. Another reporter may perhaps be detailed to follow up the trail. And sometimes when a big story has to be cut up into filaments various men may be required to follow up each detail. A fourth thing is that the reporter can never be too careful about his personal appearance. His profession takes him over wide fields and every

variety of society. The sight of a press table at some of our meetings crowded by men in all manner of shabby-genteel attire is disrespectful to the hosts and extremely damaging to the reputation not alone of individual newspapers but to the Press as a whole. A fifth, but perhaps the most important thing, is the keeping of an engagement diary with forthcoming events posted up to date, and even the hour noted. This is a duty often carried out by the sub-editor who is responsible for handling the reporter's copy. But very often it is the reporter who has to keep it up to date. To a knowledgeable reporter this is a great guide; for not only can he be punctual at the appointments, but he can study up the subjects that will come up at the meetings or other connected matters concerned with the story he is in charge of.

To every reporter on a small provincial paper or one of the bigger metropolitan dailies the lesson will be first learnt that a sub-editor dislikes nothing so heartily as a reporter coming empty-handed into the office. It often happens that while the immediate objective of the reporter flashes in the pan, if the latter has his eyes and ears about, he will have another unexpected story falling plump into his arms. One of the scoops of journalism had been brought off like this. One of the Directors of the Amalga-

mated Press relates the story of his being detailed to meet a whaler that was returning from the frozen North. Skilfully eluding the crowd of fellow reporters, all on the same mission of finding out about the north, he boarded the whaler and learnt from the skipper of the presence of an Austrian scientist on board, who had lived in Greenland for seven years. And then, continues Mr. Blackwood, "in exchange for some domestic news that he was anxious about, I persuaded the captain not to divulge the presence of the scientist to the other reporters when the boat arrived in the harbour. When they had gone back to their offices I took the scientist to my home and every day for a week I was able to give my paper two or three columns of exclusive matter about his discoveries."*

Most reporters are started on routine engagements; and the way in which they fulfil these minor but important events may lead them to success or failure. If a man can make good copy of the unattractive exhibitions of the seamy side of life that are on before the minor courts, he will be soon put on special work and the road to fortune. Those who despair of ever being able to make readable and attractive

* *The Making of a Journalist: The Newspaper World*, London.

stories out of police court news may do well to refer to the *Daily Mail* stories, by R. E. Corder, the pseudonym of a well-known journalist, which treat the police courts not in a casual manner but in bright and interesting paragraphs.

And here the very first thing that a reporter should bear in mind is that he is not a writer of fiction or a serial. It may do for the writer of fiction to begin chronologically. For the reporter it is important—though one important Indian newspaper affects the novelist's art—to ram the climax of his story in the very first sentence, to cram the marrow of it all in the first paragraph, leaving the slow unfolding of the event to the succeeding paragraphs. Apart from its psychological effect, it aids the sub-editor who may perhaps have to cut the copy down. As an American writer puts it: "Every newspaper report should answer the questions—What? Who? Where? Why? and When?—and should do it in the first paragraph as nearly as possible. This is the first and greatest commandment in the matter of journalistic style, and the penalty for breaking it is the waste-paper basket and swift oblivion."*

The publication of proceedings in court is among the duties of a reporter, and he should keep himself well posted as to the law

* Edwin L. Schuman : *Practical Journalism*.

relating to the subject. The practice of newspapers of publishing reports forwarded by solicitors appearing for the parties is not privileged, as such are but *ex parte* reports. Whatever appears in the proceedings of an open court is privileged; and it has been decided that an action could not be brought for publishing a true account of the proceedings of a court of justice, however injurious such publication might be to the character of an individual. And at this point we are brought up against a question of honour involved. Reporters who are deputed to courts of law will easily come across the kind of individuals who pester them and gently insinuate that it would be worth their while to keep certain facts outside their columns. A reporter who is thus pestered must immediately place all the facts before his Chief. He will know how to deal with the nobbler.

Sometimes it happens judges themselves request the reporters to omit either names or entire proceedings from their reports. What then is the reporter to do? The parties in the Calcutta High Court in a case some years ago were able to get an obiter dictum from the presiding judge to this effect. Would disobedience of such direction amount to contempt of court? So far as the reporter is concerned, the issue is simple. As the law stands at present, no judge has jurisdiction

to prohibit publication of judicial proceedings, simply on the score of the importance of the parties to the proceedings, where clearly public decency or morals are not involved as in the case of divorce proceedings. The reporter's duty is to his newspaper; and it is in every case for the editor to decide whether he will carry out the direction of the court in such a matter. The court, except where the law has been expressly altered, is a public court of justice, whose proceedings may be reported with impunity.

An analogous difficulty often arises, even outside the realm of law reporting. Whether as junior reporter sent out hunting for news paragraphs or as the responsible journalist in the office, receiving confidences from various strata of the public, there is the sacredness of a confidence that the working journalist ought early to get burnt into his mind. The newspaper profession touches life at so many points; and so many persons seek the friendship of a newspaperman, often for very definite wrong reasons; he is brought into more confidential relations with fellow-humans than even doctors or lawyers: it is important for him that he should know how to respect confidences. "It is a generally accepted rule in the newspaper world that no reporter has the right to suppress

news obtained in the course of his duty; it is equally recognised that it is not permissible to accept a confidence, if by so doing he is precluded from printing certain facts. The final decision as to what shall and what shall not be published rests with the editor. To this rule, however, there is no exception. The unwritten law of good taste, and honourable dealing as between man and man must always stand first. No reporter has the right to repeat a story told him confidentially; and any thing that passes at the house of a friend should, unless explicit permission is granted to make it publicly known, be regarded as sacred. To act otherwise is to outrage the laws of hospitality and good taste. A man's personal honour comes first."—(Low Warren.)

Perhaps the most difficult part of the reporter's task is when he is sent to interview great personalities. The interview has not yet in India reached the perfection it has in the West. As yet the methods adopted amongst us are crude, and we are always given the dreary monologue of the personages interviewed, with perhaps set questions. The position of the interview, however, is unassailable even in our journalism. Lord Oxford spoke for a number of important figures in the social and political world when he said: "Public men have got completely into the

habit of blowing off their steam through this sometimes convenient but often dangerous medium. I have myself for a long time past made it a rule not to give interviews to the Press. I have been a good deal criticised both by friends and opponents for such old-fashioned austerity, but on the rare occasions when I have deviated from my practice I have generally regretted the result." Lord Oxford's misfortune notwithstanding, as he himself recognises the interview has some very good results. And it is a difficult art. One need not emulate the American reporters who are expert questioners. The story is on record that one of them asked Einstein to define relativity in a sentence. Not only should the reporter not frighten his quarry by too much flaunting of the pencil and the notebook, but he should take care of the idiosyncracies of the subject, and generally be himself well-informed on the subject-matter. A blunt attack for information or for views on all and sundry subjects is apt to unnerve even the most case-hardened subject. It must be made an invariable rule that in all cases of formal interviewing the story is not printed without its accuracy being vouchsafed by the person interviewed. The reporter must remember he is presenting a man and his views to the public, and it is important to eliminate

even the least chance of possible misrepresentation. The stupid habit of question and answer should be eliminated entirely; because the reader is not interested in judging the reporter's cleverness as a questioner. In all cases of informal interviewing, whether it is done in the office or at the residence of the person interviewed, the name of the informant should never be divulged. The profession of journalism, as the ultimate court of appeal for the public, often has confided to the members a variety of important and interesting information; and many editors have even faced the rigours of a prosecution in refusing to divulge the name either of contributor or of informant. It is a reputation for trustworthiness that has to be jealously guarded; and the reporter as the individual representing the newspaper to the public has to be very careful in this respect.

There is a branch of reporting that is somewhat an exclusive feature of Madras journalism; and that is what may be called the reporting of the parish pump. It is certainly true that no newspaper can hope for its fair share of readers in the southern districts that does not give what is called mofussil news or district news in plenty. One prominent newspaper has read this local feeling to such good advantage that it has thought it worth its while to appoint its own

full-time men in the district centres. But at present, it is questionable if these reporters do anything out of the ordinary beyond chronicling small beer and news of the territory in the ordinary and crude sense of the term. One country paper in America, among other things, instructs its correspondents thuswise: "Say a good word for your town, your local industries, your churches, your local societies or organisations. People like to read the news first, and then they like to read about matters in which they are interested, but which are not strictly news. Relics, heirlooms, old coins, natural curiosities etc., can be described and will be of interest to everybody, even if the person who possesses them is unknown to the reader. . . . Avoid too frequent mention of certain persons even if they stand high in the community. The people whose names never appear in your columns are sure to notice your apparent partiality. . . . Write nothing relating to church wrangles, personal matters, and private family affairs, and let violently alone anything having the appearance of scandal. Don't try to 'get even' with anybody through the columns of a newspaper. It may injure you, and it is sure to injure the paper."

This is excellent advice. To which may be added one important word on an aspect of news

seldom given any prominence in a country predominantly agricultural. Though leader-writers speak truly of agriculture as the basic industry of the country, even in the southern presidency, the newspapers with their penchant for the small beer of the countryside have not cared to publish or to instruct their district reporters to furnish them with all the relevant data regarding seasonal conditions, the state of the weather, the sources of irrigation and their defects, when freshes come in the rivers, the progress of cultivation, the condition of crops, of cattle-fodder, the position of live-stock, the state of the produce markets, marketing facilities and similar information that ought to be of such incalculable advantage for the agriculturist. A Bombay newspaper used now and again to give meteorological news from its own correspondents in the districts. This is a subject to which increasing attention ought to be directed, and it will be the function of the reporter in the districts or on country papers to interest himself in the doings of the farmer and the cultivating tenant.

It is necessary to add a few words on a branch of reporting which is likely to come into much greater prominence in the future than has been the case in the past. The work of reporting the proceedings of the various legislative bodies in this country is at present very perfunctorily

done, for obvious reasons. Not much of what in the West is called gallery and lobby work is ever attempted, considering that here is great scope for the individual reporter's initiative and style. The mistake may lie partly in the political position, partly in the fact that the service is in the hands of a news syndicate, and, where special correspondents are employed, in many cases these are over-worked servants of the syndicate itself. Naturally after long hours in the gallery, much hasty summarising of interminable speeches, they are not in a position to serve their newspapers effectively. With the increase in the strength of our legislative bodies and the certain prospect of much larger powers than hitherto being vested in these bodies in the future, there is the greater need for developing this side of reportorial work. Good ears and observant eyes, with meticulous regard for accuracy, the names of members correctly memorised, or what is called the eye for heads developed, will carry the gallery man very far. More and more in the future the line between sketch-writing and council reporting will wear very thin indeed; since, except for one conspicuous example, even to day no newspaper finds it possible to waste space in giving verbatim reports of speeches, except on critical occasions.

The first duty of the parliamentary reporter is to get himself acquainted with the biography of the members of the house, and not to confine himself purely to those who are cast for star parts in the proceedings. For, as has been well said, the best material for the news story is to be found not on the front benches but, "in the flickering shadows of a poor light under the galleries." The reporter should study the peculiarities and the mannerisms, the hobbies and the professions of the members; find out what each of them is interested in. Perchance one of them may be an expert; and unless you know it, you may fail to get the proper perspective for appreciating his opinions and speeches on the subject, that may perhaps be delivered in the course of an unconsidered speech when the house is tired. The third thing for the reporter to bear in mind is the question hour. It is fairly easy to follow the proceedings so long as the matter is confined to the printed list of questions and answers. But it always happens that supplementary and private notice questions often elicit important or startling information and are occasionally enlivened by bright sallies of wit or embittered by gusts of passion. The object of members of the Government being very often to get rid of this item on the order paper as quick as possible, the enunciation and

the delivery are often most inaudible. It behoves the reporter to take great pains to get the phraseology as accurately as possible.

Lobby work is of a character of its own. A safe and wholesome rule to be observed is that no politician should be tackled unless some definite point has to be put to him. He may resent a roving talk intended to lead nowhere as wasting his time and as stamping the reporter very green indeed. Secondly, the reporter must be a good listener, and not air his views under the mistaken idea of impressing the politician interviewed. Thirdly, when a fellow-pressman is engaging a politician, it is bad form for another to seek to engage him at the same time. The admission to the lobby is a great privilege and carries with it corresponding obligations. Now and again information may be given to a lobbyist, which he may long dearly to publish; but he must cultivate the habit of holding his tongue. And both in regard to gallery work and lobbying, the reporter will find that a good knowledge of politics and a working knowledge of all the intricacies of the great issues that now and again dominate deliberative bodies will be of immense help. He will then find the politicians of whichever party welcome him as one likely to give them food for thought and be eager to let him have all the information he

wants. Only a reputation for fair treatment and honesty is wanted to make the reporter the success he will be.

CHAPTER VI *(CONCLUDED)

THE REPORTER, HIS WORK AND QUALIFICATIONS

Some concrete illustrations of the kind of news that editors and news agencies want may be appropriately given here, for the benefit of the aspiring reporter. They are chosen from American journalism; and though the methods of hustle beloved of the American journalist are not always desirable, still the instructions given below convey a fair idea of what is news and what is not. Individual newspapers have standards and styles of their own. The budding reporter will always find it worth-while to seek definite instructions from the editor of the newspaper to which he proposes to offer his services.

The Chicago Tribune instructs its correspondents that the classes of news matter here indicated are *Not Wanted*.

Fatal or other accidents to conductors, engineers, brakemen, switchmen, or persons

* From *Practical Journalism*, by Edwin L. Schumann. By permission of the publishers, D. Appleton and Company, New York.

not identified, or persons in obscure positions in life, except when two or more fatalities result from the same accident or there is a great loss of property involved.

Trivial accidents, such as the breaking of legs, losing of fingers by mowing machines, or other like events.

Insignificant robberies, burglaries, till-tappings etc.

Obituaries of ordinary individuals. But deaths of men of State or National repute should be noticed. In such cases when there is time wire the *Tribune* for instructions.

Rapes, abortions or seductions, except when persons of marked prominence are involved, and then be careful to give only facts that are in proof through judicial proceedings. Send nothing on mere rumour. Cases of incest or infanticide are never wanted.

Reports of the celebration or observance of holidays, except when persons of State or National importance are to speak, and in such cases give advance notice by mail and receive instructions.

Daily account of testimony in murder trials, unless on instructions.

Specials regarding sporting matters, except after first asking and obtaining instructions.

Abstract of sermons by telegraph, unless they are ordered.

Accounts of country fairs. But succinct reports of the opening of State fairs may be sent.

Puffs of hotels or any other advertising.

Theatrical or other amusement notices, except in the case of large cities and artistes of National repute, first productions of important plays or operas, or other noteworthy events; and in all such cases instructions should be asked for.

Reports of proceedings of secret societies, except on special instructions.

Reports of school commencements, or teacher's or other institutes, unless they are ordered.

Crop news unless specially ordered. In case of rain or frost at critical times, however, wire the *Tribune* and receive instructions.

Weddings unless previously ordered. Give advance notice thereof, when the parties are prominent, and await instructions.

Ordinary damage suits.

Births of freaks, and monstrosities.

Far away crimes (unless persons of prominence are involved), or executions unless ordered.

These are some of the kind of news that the best American papers do not care to get and

will not print if a careless correspondent sends it to them. The beginner may feel like exclaiming in dismay that there is nothing left to send, but a moment's thought will dispel that discouraging illusion. The sheet of printed instructions sent by the Associated Press of America to its correspondents contains a similar list of forbidden subjects, but it also states the positive as well as the negative side of the reporter's limitations. The following extracts will show the classes of happenings that are regarded as news.

The kinds of news here indicated Are Wanted, except where otherwise specified.

Political news must be without personal or partisan bias, and of such importance as to be of general interest beyond the confines of your State. Instructions will be given for covering State and Congressional conventions and others if wanted.

Election returns of only local significance should not be sent except when called for.

Mass-meetings, speeches, banquets etc. will be ordered when wanted.

Appointments of railway officers of the rank of general passenger and freight agents and their superiors, and of any other official in whose selection the State or country at large would be interested.

The organisation of new, or the consolidation of old, railway companies; the formation of trusts or corporations affecting large aggregations of capital or property, or the welfare of the general public, always eliminating any suggestion of advertising.

Failures, when in excess of \$ 30,000 the assets, liabilities, and preference being given; also the receiver or assignee when one is appointed.

Defalcations should be handled only when in excess of \$ 10,000 unless attended by sensational circumstance.

Strikes, where the number of employees thrown out of work is in excess of 200, or of such a nature as to affect large property interests, or block transportation; or if there should be violence offered on the part of the strikers.

Storms when of phenomenal severity, or attended by loss of much property or of life.

Accidents, when there is a loss of two or more lives, or great destruction of property.

Railway disasters, resulting in the destruction of property in excess of \$ 50,000 or the loss of one or two lives, or the injury of a number of persons, or with circumstances such as usually follow the collision of passenger trains. The common mishaps of freight trains are not wanted.

Wrecks of vessels when valued at \$ 10,000 or over, or there is loss of life.

Fires, when \$ 50,000 or over is involved, there is loss of life, or a panic and people are injured or endangered, or three or more business buildings are destroyed. Insurance by companies is not wanted unless ordered, but the total amount should be stated.

Trials: Proceedings in important cases before the courts must be sent in accordance with special instructions, which will be forwarded on application. Decisions affecting railway corporations, large aggregations of property, the interests of the general public, and test cases of national importance, should be covered concisely. The preliminary hearing or trials of ordinary criminal cases, or the verdicts, or the sentences are not wanted.

Murders: Briefly, unless accompanied by unusual circumstances, or the parties should be of such social standing as to make them known beyond their locality.

Robberies of \$ 5,000 or over, unless more than ordinarily sensational.

Hangings: The story of the crime (if ordered) should be written up and sent in advance by mail to the Central Office. Instructions as to the quantity of matter to be telegraphed will be given in each case.

Rapes and abortions : Not wanted, except when the victim of the latter is well-known and dies, or the perpetrator of the former is pursued and lynched by a mob, or is rescued by the authorities.

Sporting events : Notice should be given to the Central Office in advance of all sporting events of State or National interest, in order that, if desired, instructions may be sent regarding them. Prize fights, athletic contests, shooting matches, etc., the participants in which are known only locally, should not be handled unless death results, or a State or world's record is broken.

Edwin L. Schuman gives what seem to him to be the most important rules for the success of a reporter in the form of a decalogue. For the last three commandments, he is indebted to the experienced managing editor of the *Chicago Daily News*, Mr. Charles H. Dennis.

1. Put the pith and point of each story into the first paragraph.

2. Try always to cram as much meaning as possible into the fewest words compatible with clearness. Never write a sentence that must be read twice before being understood.

3. Put no editorial comments or debatable statements into news matter. Keep your personal likes and dislikes out of your copy.

4. Try never to let a rival score a "beat" against you, yet beware of hasty and unconfirmed statements, especially if a libel may lurk in them.

5. Strive always for accuracy, and scorn a "fake". When a story is doubtful, get other versions of it. Most newspaper errors are due to the fact that the reporter has heard only one witness.

6. Don't neglect to read your paper every day, including the editorials. Go through your own work and try to see how you might have improved it.

7. Never break a promise. Make no promises that you may not be able to keep.

8. Be industrious. Obey orders implicitly at all times, if you can do so with honour.

9. Respect your business. Meet every man frankly and fearlessly. Never apologise for being a reporter; it is a great and honourable calling. On the other hand, do not regard yourself entitled to peculiar favours because of your position.

10. Respect yourself. Cultivate good habits, good health, good morals, good manners. Aim high.

CHAPTER VII

AT THE OFFICE

“ We always seem at our work,” wrote C. E. Montague, “to be closer up against the life of our time than anywhere else, nearer its centre and more in its confidence. With all that is setting people agog in cities all over the world clicking and humming in your ears, tapped or buzzed out at the end of all the fluent, imperturbable wires that run in the place, it needs little effort of fancy to feel as if you were hearing the actual stir of existence, the unconscious breath of life itself : and the best of its pulse seems to set your own going better.” * A more adequate description of the spiritual atmosphere enveloping a newspaper office it would be vain to search after. Having seen how news is gathered from the four corners of the earth, and seen the onerous duties and responsibilities of the reporters, it is time for us to enquire how it is all brought together and served to the waiting public ; and try if we cannot sense something of that perfume that, ac-

* Oliver Elton : *C. E. Montague, A Memoir.*

according to one of our master-minds, surrounds the newspaper office.

Newspaper organisation in India, in the indigenous section of it at any rate, does not quite follow the lines of its parent examples. In well-recognised newspaper offices in the West, we come across the Editor, the Managing Editor, the News Editor and the leader writer, assisted by other departmental editors: we have also the chief personages who control the circulation, advertisement and printing branches of the organisation. Only those who work in a newspaper office will be able to realise how each of these hierarchs is dependent on the other, and how the production of the modern newspaper is impossible unless this interdependence of the various limbs of the organisation is recognised and these limbs are brought into harmonious and unified action. Just as the successful reporter may not always make the ideal sub-editor, so also the ideal sub-editor or news editor, for that matter, may not make the efficient managing editor. In India, however, it is very rarely, even in our better class newspapers, that we have the Managing Editor, or the other species known in the West as the News Editor, the sports editor &c. There is no doubt we are having an increasing approximation to the methods of organisation in the West, except that

the News Editor so-called, the dictator and tyrant, before whom quail both the reporter and the sub-editor, has not arrived in Indian journalism. An American authority has it that there are three classes of men in every newspaper office : those who write, those who edit, and those who neither write nor edit but direct. This last class is a variety not yet fully developed in this land in the manner known to the West and particularly America. The tendency, however, seems to be in that direction ; for except news editorship, which is in India put in commission, so to say, our journalism has developed, in however crude a fashion, its sports, cinema, literary and art editors. If we add to this the advertisement, the circulation and the printing departments, it is clear that the most difficult positions in a highly efficient newspaper office of our days are those of an executive nature. In this section, however, we shall be concentrating on those on whom falls the duty of presenting to the public the news gathered from all over the world. It has been truly indeed remarked that "the public knows the reporter, and it knows the editor ; but of the man who toils through the night putting copy on a hook the public knows little or nothing." Of this important individual we shall see something in the succeeding paragraphs.

The most important work in a newspaper office is done by the sub-editor. It is his duty to glance through every item of news that is brought into the office by way of the telegraph, the telephone, the post. More news comes in generally than can ever be accepted; and he has to use the pruning knife ruthlessly. He has to decide what is to go in, and what not, and he must decide quickly and efficiently. The production of the newspaper everyday is a race against time; and it is essential that the sub-editor should always win. What is even more important, he has to decide the suitable caption for the news and the place it will go in. Space in a paper is always limited, a fact seldom recognised by staff reporters or by the outside contributors; and the space for window-dressing is more limited still. On one day the whole world may conspire to give a big budget of news; and the sub-editor has to pick and choose, and weight everything with a nice scale of values. To those who are trained to this work, this may come almost instinctively; but it presupposes a native talent for artistic display along with a knowledge of the public taste. This, alas for the peace of the sub-editor, is not all.

All sorts of "copy" are handed in to the sub-editor; and it is a miracle how he copes with the demands of space, the policy of his

paper and the abstruseness and intrinsic importance of the matter that filters through his hands. A recent writer, an experienced journalist and editor himself, has denounced the sub-editor as "the hired assassin of the trade, a prostitute in facts," with "mysterious ways." All depends on the point of view, which is not purely technical, however. It will be generally agreed with this writer that "by his method of handling and presenting a given piece of news, he (the sub-editor) may exercise more influence than all the leader-writers that ever lived." The qualifications, therefore, of an office of this tremendous power, exercised with no sense of responsibility except to one's own conscience and the demands of loyalty to the proprietor, will be obviously those out of the common run. One competent critic has been laying it down that apart from all the human qualities, to which he would give the first place, the efficient sub-editor must possess wide general knowledge, a special knowledge of history, geography and general literature, some sound acquaintance with the principles of science, art, commerce and economics. To this formidable list may also be added "a close knowledge of contemporary politics and politicians and public men generally, as well as of the great questions of the day, and some acquaintance with the

general principles of the law of libel." Or take the combined wisdom of three important men who had held various staff appointments in Fleet Street, that lays down the following qualifications for a successful sub-editor * :

1. Accuracy, accuracy and again accuracy; keen sense of news and news values ; the cultivation of the faculty of seeing and seizing on the dominating fact in an item of news ; the ability to write head-lines which tell the reader at a glance what has happened ; a sound general education ; last but not least lucidity.

2. The critical faculty ; a wide range of reading ; an instinct for news ; a constructive mind ; alertness of mind and a great capacity for work ; adaptability ; command of good English. (If he is a "dry" subject, so much the better for him and his chief.)

3. Good sub-editors are "safe"; write simple, accurate English ; their headlines tell the story, and each cross-heading mentions a fact ; hand-writing is clean and causes few printers' errors ; can deal quickly with a new story, doing essentials first, and keep in mind the special requirements of the paper. The only "safe" sub-editor is one who has had years of experience. The following will always sell their

**The Making of A Journalist: The Newspaper World* Press, London.

brains in a rising market—a lively but “safe” police court sub-editor ; a good foreign sub-editor ; a good “copy-taster” (who reads all the news coming in and marks its value, with all necessary instructions to the sub-editors).

Mr. F. J. Mansfield of the *Times* stated in his lectures to the Journalism Diploma students of the London University that “the sub-editor’s room in a great daily newspaper office is a sort of whispering gallery of the world, and the mind that is competent to apprehend and appraise the significance of its manifold revelations must possess natural aptitude for its strenuous work, and must have been adequately trained for its task. In addition it must be backed by the requisite temperament. A cool head, a clear brain, a power of quick reaction, a capacity for intensive effort and a gift of accuracy that is not impaired by high speed demands—these are some of the essential qualities for the highest work.” To those who demur to this description on the ground of its being over-coloured or of its demanding qualities out of the common, it may be said in answer that, outside the province of policy and legal responsibility, it is the sub-editor who is ultimately responsible for the safe conduct of the newspaper, for what it looks like and stands for to the average reader.

The first duty of the sub-editor is to study with the utmost care and master the style, tone, make-up and policy of the newspaper to which he is appointed. Of the intricacies of make-up connected with his newspaper he cannot afford to lose time in making himself the effective master. And this varies with every newspaper, not only in the presentation of news and the choice of captions, but also in the position allotted to various news and the relative importance of news.

There is one fundamental which the sub-editor should thoroughly grasp; and it is nowhere more needed than in this land, where newspapers depend on syndicated news service. The golden rule whereby an accused person is presumed innocent till proved guilty by those competent to give a verdict does not apply to news. All news that comes on to his table the sub-editor must rigorously examine and put to as strict proof as possible. Ultimately, the editor will hold him responsible for poor headlines, libellous statements, involved sentences, and errors of every description; while the reporters will never forgive him for mangling the product of their pens. The sub-editor must take nothing on trust, but must verify facts, dates, names. The latter are often a source of great trouble, which may be prevented by

their being written out always in block capitals. And care should be taken to see that a man's name is spelt out in the manner he usually adopts. There is no excuse for scamping this obvious and elementary duty; for reference books are ample and must always be at hand in any well-appointed office.

To cite but a few instances of the pitfalls that await the inexperienced sub-editor. Mr. Geoffrey Corbett of the Punjab, a nominated member of the Legislative Assembly, used consistently to be referred to by one newspaper as Sir Geoffrey Corbett, who had retired from service long earlier. Another newspaper thought that Sri Prakasha was the same person as T. Prakasam; and based some very pungent comments on the latter's supposed utterances. When Mr. Waman Kabadi was arrested at Lahore during the last civil disobedience campaign, his name was announced as Miss Kabadi. The confusion that overtook London newspapers during the first Indian Round Table Conference had this excuse of the novelty and the strangeness of Indian names in general and the jaw-breaking character of Madrassi names in particular. But when the "Morning Post" wrote a long screed on "Sankarlal, the Banker" and animadverted on Mr. Gandhi's great partiality for millionaires

and bankers, it added to innate ignorance the further vice of maliciousness. But not always is the consequence a mere reflection on sub-editorial capacity. It may happen in criminal cases that this mistake in the names of persons and places may prove a costly luxury. So in truth it proved, to cite an instance, when a case of attempted murder by a man in Newport (Monmouthshire) led to a claim for malicious libel by a man of the same name in Newport in Shropshire. The newspaper had to pay without the matter going to court.

Place names often lead to ludicrous errors. Mr. Charles Sarle recalls a case where zeal without discretion proved its own undoing. Reuter once announced that the British Fleet was manouvring off Lagos. "The sub-editor, conscientiously turning up his gazeteer, noted that Lagos was a port and town of Nigeria, and, in a foot-note to Reuter's message, gave a vivid little penpicture of the Gold Coast, the Slave Coast, and the blue waters of the Bight of Benin. It was excellently done. The atmosphere was finely produced, the local colour was perfect—but alas! the Lagos off which the British Fleet had been manouvring was not the Lagos of the West African coast, but the Lagos which nestles on the southern shores of Portugal."*

* *The Making of a Journalist.*

But it does not follow necessarily or in great part that it is all the work of the blue pencil. It is not always a mere matter of cutting down copy ; though most working journalists should have at one time or another shed tears at having to cut slice after slice of matter to meet the demands of and the pressure on space. One of the greatest lessons of the sub-editorial art is how to condense four or five "sticks" of matter to a half stick, but retain at the same time the essential features of the original story. A sub-editor who knows how to effect this is a priceless treasure in a newspaper office. Quite as often it is a matter of building up. Some papers favour what is called "write-up stories," which give scope to a man with a racy style, gifted with humour and a turn for neat description. But woe unto the sub-editor, who gives reins to his fancy ; for his function is but the terse, clear and lucid presentation of news that the reader wants. He has to make it interesting and to make it intelligible, so that the average reader may know as much as it is possible for him to know about the news he is reading.

Cases of railway accidents, colliery disasters, shipping disasters, provide ample room for work of this character. They carry their own danger, as happened in one notorious case

in Bengal, when newspapers allowed themselves to be deluded by the story of "a real horrified spectator" of the Belur train smash on the East Indian Railway. A great number of miscellaneous details, several different and possibly contradictory accounts, have to be sorted out, pieces of news on the surface unconnected with the main episode have to be fitted in, and a complete story has to be presented of the event that should at once be effective, dramatic, human and accurate. And all the time, the sub-editor is racing against time. Mr. Low Warren in his excellent book* quotes the account of the manner in which the *New York Independent* received the news of the *Titanic* disaster, on Monday, April 15, 1913, just five minutes before the mail edition was going to the Press. We make no apology for giving the entire story here, by kind permission of the author, quite as much because it graphically illustrates all the mental qualities required of news editors and workers in a newspaper office, as because it is inconceivable, as things stand, that any office in this country will hurry up in this manner.

"Boy," he (the cable editor) called sharply.

An office boy was at his side in a moment.

* *Journalism from A to Z* by Low Warren. Herbert Joseph, 9 John Street, Adelphi, London W.C. 7/6.

“Send this upstairs ; tell them the head is to come ; double column, and tell the night editor to rip open two columns on the first page for a one stick despatch of the Titanic striking an iceberg and sinking.”

Every one in the office was astir in a moment and came over to see the cable editor write on a sheet of copy paper the following head, which he indicated was to be set up in this form :

TITANIC SINKING
IN MID-OCEAN ; HIT
GREAT ICEBERG

Boy, he called again ; but it was not necessary—a boy in a newspaper office knows news the first time he sees it.

“Tell them that’s the head for the Titanic.”

Then he wrote briefly this telegraphic despatch, and as he did so, he said to another office boy at his side : “Tell the operator to shut off that story he is taking and get me a clear wire to Montreal ”

This is what he wrote to the Montreal correspondent, probably at work at his desk in a Montreal newspaper office at that hour :

Cape Race says White Star liner
TITANIC struck iceberg, is sinking
and wants immediate assistance. Rush
every line you can get. We will hold
open for you until 3-30.

"Give that to the operator and find out if we caught the mail on that Titanic dispatch," he said quickly to the boy.

In a moment the boy returned.

"O. K. on both," he said.

The City Editor, who had just put on his coat previous to going away for the night, took it off. The night city editor at the head of the copy desk, where all the local copy (as a reporter's story is called) is read, and the telegraph editor, stood together, joined later by the night editor, for the mail edition had left the composing room for the stereotypers and then to the pressroom and thence to be scattered wherever on the globe newspapers find readers.

The "Titanic" staff was immediately organised, for at that hour most of the staff were still at work. The city editor took the helm.

"Get the papers for April 11, all of them," he said to the head office boy, "and then send word to the Art department to quit everything to make three cuts, which I shall send them right down."

Then to the night city editor: "Get up a story of the vessel itself. Some of the stuff they sent us the other day that we did not use, and I ordered it put in the envelope. Play up the mishap at the start. Get up a passenger list

story and an obituary of Smith, her commander."

There was no mention of Smith in the dispatch, but city editors retain such things in their heads for immediate use, and this probably explains in a measure why they hold down their job; also having, it might be added, executive judgment, which is sometimes right.

"Assign somebody to the White Star line and see what they have got."

The night city editor went back to the circular table where the seven or eight men who read reporters' copy were gathered.

"Get up as much as you can of the passenger list of the 'Titanic.' She is sinking off Newfoundland," he said briefly to one.

And to another: "Write me a story of the 'Titanic', the new White Star liner, on her maiden trip, telling her mishap with the 'New York,' at the start."

And to another: "Write me a story of Captain E. J. Smith."

Then to a reporter sitting idly about: "Get your hat and coat quick; go down to the White Star line office and telephone all you can about the 'Titanic' sinking off Newfoundland."

Then to another reporter: "Get the White Star line on the 'phone and find out what they have got of the sinking of the 'Titanic'. Find

out who is the executive head in New York, his address and telephone number."

And in another part of the room the city editor was saying to the office boy: "Get me all the 'Titanic' pictures you have and a photo or cut of Captain E. J. Smith."

Two boys instantaneously went to work, for the photos of men are kept separate from the photos of inanimate things. The city editor selected three. "Tell the art department to make a three column cut of the 'Titanic', a two-column of the interior, and a two-column of Smith."

In the meantime the Associated Press bulletins came briefly.

Paragraph by paragraph the cable editor was sending the story to the composing room. What was going on upstairs every one knew. They were side tracking everything else, and the copy-cutter in the composing room was sending the story in "takes," as they are called, of a single paragraph to each compositor. His blue pencil marked each individual piece of copy with a letter and a number, so that when the dozen or so men setting up the story had their work finished, the story might be put together consecutively.

"Tell the operator," said the cable editor again to the office boy, "to duplicate that dis-

patch I gave him to our Halifax man. Get his name out of the correspondents' book."

"Who wrote that story of the 'Carmania' in the icefield?" said the city editor to the copy reader who "handled" the home-coming of the "Carmania," which arrived Sunday night, and the story of which was already in the mail edition of the paper before him. The copy reader told him. He called the reporter to his desk.

"Take that story," said the night city editor, "and give us a column on it. Don't rewrite the story; add paragraphs here and there to show the vast extent of the icefields. Make it straight copy, so that nothing in that story will have to be reset. You have just thirty minutes to catch the edition. Write it in twenty."

"Get the passenger lists of the 'Olympic' and the 'Baltic'," was the assignment given to another of the reporters, all alert waiting for their names to be called, every man awake at the switch.

In the meantime the story from the Montreal man was being ticked off; on another wire Halifax was coming to life.

"Men," said the city editor, "we have just five minutes left to make the city edition. Jam it down tight."

Already the three cuts had been made, the telegraph editor was handling the Montreal story, his assistant the Halifax end, and the cable editor was still editing the Associated Press bulletins and writing a new head to tell the rest of the story that the additional details brought. The White Star line man had a list of names of passengers of the 'Titanic' and found that they numbered 1,300 and that she carried a crew of 860.

In the meantime proofs of all the 'Titanic' matter that had been set were coming to the desk of the managing editor, in charge over all, but giving special attention to the editorial matter.

All his suggestions went through the city editor and on down the line, but he himself went from desk to desk overlooking the work.

"Time's up," said the city editor, but before he finished, the cable editor cried, "Let the two-column head stand and tell them to add this head :"

At 12-27 this morning Blurred Signals
by Wireless told of Women Being
Put Off in Lifeboats—Three Liners
Rushing to Aid of 1,300 Imperilled
Passengers and Crew of 860 Men.

"Did we catch it?" asked the cable editor of the boy standing at the composing room tube.

"We did," he said triumphantly.

"One big pull for the last edition, men," said the city editor.

"We are going in at 3-20. Let's beat the town with a complete paper."

The enthusiasm was catching fire. Throughout the office it was a Bedlam of noise—clicking typewriters, clicking telegraph instruments, and telephone bells ringing added to the whistle of the tubes that led from the city room to the composing room, the press room, the stereotype room and the business office. The latter, happily, not in use, but throughout the office men worked; nobody shouted, no one lost his head; men were flushed, but the cool, calm, deliberate way in which the managing editor smoked his cigar helped much to relieve the tension.

"Three-fifteen, men," said the city editor, admonishingly, "every line must be up by 3-20. Five minutes more".

The city editor walked rapidly from desk to desk.

"All up," said the night city editor, "and three minutes to the good."

At the big table stood the city editor, cable editor, night city editor, and managing editor. They were looking over the completed headlines that should tell the story to the world.

"That will hold'em, I guess," said the city editor, and the head went upstairs.

The men waited about and talked and smoked. Bulletins came in, but with no important details. Going to press at 3-20 meant a wide circulation. At 4-20 the Associated Press sent "Good-night," but at that hour the presses had been running uninterruptedly for almost an hour.

Every sub-editor worth his salt will at once recognise the accuracy of this description. The unexpected always happens in a newspaper office; and, though to the uninitiated outsider it might look as if the office were all in a chaos, still actually the organisation does move with the celerity and regularity of clock-work. From office to office, the scene is the same, when anything of a really exciting character comes on the wire; it only varies in intensity. And this again is measured by the capacity, the resourcefulness and the alertness of the sub-editor, who is the lynch-pin of the entire system. As Mr. Low Warren remarks, "no time must be lost; the staff must receive its instructions; correspondents must be communicated with; references must be looked up; drawings put in hand; photographs be secured, or if pigeon-holed in readiness for just such an occasion, be sent up to the engraving department in order that blocks may be made for them."

Publication of court cases is one of those pitfalls that the sub-editor must be careful about. Any distortion or omission of important portions in the stress of summarising may often lead to serious trouble for the journal in question. When cases are reported or the evidence of witnesses, care must be taken to see that no prejudiced version of the story is left in the public mind. All facts and points that have the effect of neutralising one or other part of the report should be scrupulously published. And the practice of publishing one side of a case in advance of the other, though there is nothing illegal about it, carries with it the responsibility of publishing the other side, if and when it is properly presented. Courts have often had occasion to deprecate the practice of newspapers publishing statements of this kind *ex parte*. The connection between malicious sub-editing, elaboration or erasure of copy, and even the fomenting of international rivalries and jealousies, is well illustrated by the classic case of Bismarck's deft editing of the notorious Elms telegram, thus precipitating the Franco-German War of 1870.

The sub-editor could not be too careful of the words used in the messages he handles. One unfortunate example, which might well have led to unpleasant consequences, may be mention-

ed. A Colombo message dated October 26, 1932, related the findings of the Ceylon sub-committee on the reorganisation of the Excise Department of the Island. One relevant sentence, as printed in 'a Calcutta paper, read as follows: "Their considered opinion is there is *no* foundation for the charge that the payments were made to and received by (the officers of the department) in connexion with the discharge of their duties." The same sentence, however, appeared in a Madras newspaper with the word "no" omitted. The reader will see what a difference this makes to the character of an important body of public servants. Obviously both could not be correct.

The technique of newspaper make-up has greatly altered in these days, mainly under the influence of America, though not all the garishness of the latter has been imitated. It is a subject requiring special study and attention, and also scrupulous regard to the policy and style of the newspaper to which the sub-editor may belong. A practical knowledge of printing and the mechanical side of newspaper production is to-day increasingly demanded of sub-editors in this country. The selection of display types and the performance of what is called in the slang of the press-room "stone-work" are now within the province of the sub-editor. Gone are the days when once the copy left the desk, the sub-

editor's task was finished, except that the exigencies of make-up or the intrusion of more important matter at a later stage, tending to crowd out his copy and hence needing its compression, threw on him the duty of cutting it down in proof; thenceforward in olden days the printer carried on. But to-day things are altered. It is the business of the sub-editor to instruct the printer on all matters regarding type both for copy and for display. He must therefore learn and learn quickly and efficiently how type is set, how pages are made up, how formes are sent to press and moulded, how plates are cast and how the printing machines are equipped. It may be useful also for him to know something of photo reproduction. One of the hardest parts of the task of the sub-editor's work is to write headlines for the stories he edits. That they have made newspapers brighter in these days, quite as much by the intrinsic worth of them, indicating what is in store for the reader who reads further on, as by the technical details of type sizes and much freer lead or whites between the lines and the words in the headlines, will be readily conceded.

It is a widespread belief, firmly rooted in the Indian mind, that the leader-writer is the most important figure in a newspaper office. It is sufficient to say here that the belief is a wrong

one, but that on the contrary the most important person in a newspaper office is the man who is in charge of handling, selecting and featuring the news. Few realise the tremendous power enjoyed by the Press by practising the twin arts of selection and emphasis, to which may be added a third, that of suppression. Every time the news editor or the principal sub-editor is making a decision, he is boosting up something or helping in obscuring something else. Without the need for actually suppressing a piece of news, or publishing a false bit of news, the journalist can suggest whatever effect he wants.

Arthur Griffiths, the well-known Irish leader, was faced with a problem not unlike the one that has often confronted nationalist editors in our country. There was a strict press law in Ireland, which left him no peace. So he thought he could hit upon a new method of circumventing the Government. He began to publish a journal entitled "Scissors and Paste." It merely consisted of extracts from the newspapers which the Government had left free. But he got the effect he wanted; his powers of selection and display created just the feelings of hatred towards the government which he desired. And the authorities woke up to their danger soon, and whether legally or not, took effective action against him.

In October 1932, a Calcutta journal published an extract from a socialist indictment of the British Press, which was accused of creating a false impression about a certain happening, namely the alleged despatch of Russian troops to Manchuria. This news was prominently featured by several newspapers. But, later, the news was found to be false, and a contradiction was telegraphed round. Some papers did not publish the contradiction at all, others put it in an obscure corner among the "also ran's", where many readers would fail to notice it.

But more deliberate arts of suppression are also resorted to. An apposite illustration will strike the Indian reader in the *Times'* refusal to publish the letter signed by several distinguished Indian leaders animadverting on Katherine Mayo. When an important semi-religious body in South India presented a memorandum to Mr. Montagu in 1917, one Madras newspaper flatly refused to publish the same, on the ground apparently that the manifesto was inimical to the national interests as interpreted by this editor. And again, an important provincial Congress Committee, which felt aggrieved by the conduct of certain newspapers, passed a resolution advocating a boycott of two of them. Promptly the news was suppressed by those two newspapers.

CHAPTER VII—(CONTINUED.)

AT THE OFFICE

Victorian journalism attached great weight to leader-writing; and owing to the political conditions prevailing in India, the fashion has survived among us in all its strength. The great Delane is reported to have said that he would rather have walked from Scotland to London on his hands and feet than that during his absence a certain leading article on the Eastern Question should have appeared. They were halcyon days for the leader-writer; he laid down the law for the Government and the public. A few lines in the *Times* could make the Cabinet sit up or seriously perturb foreign chancellories. But, slowly, with the development of the Popular Press, the importance of the leading article in the West has tended to diminish. Yet, the constant iteration of certain opinions, based on facts and events very often selected to support those opinions, and spread over the other pages, is bound to make some impression on the mind of the constant reader.

Today, in the West, at least in that section of the Press which caters to the masses, there is

no necessity to be well-informed and carefully reasoned-out. It is enough if the article summarises, as far as possible, the issues of the day, and presses a particular point of view, without rhyme or reason, persistently. It is enough if it provides its readers with catch phrases, which may serve the place of argument, and conceal want of thought. At any rate it is very rarely that public opinion is moulded by leading articles; news, suppressed or manufactured or just as it is, does the trick.* There is an old puzzle about the influence of the leading articles, which is to the effect that it is either superfluous or provocative.

The position in India is still approximately what it was in Victorian England. The printed word has a fascination for the Eastern mind, which is prone to think of it as infallible. Add to this that for a single newspaper buyer there are many who borrow it; and the habit of reading a newspaper aloud to a large circle of listeners persists in this land today.† The average reader is much more prone to take his

* This is not so modern a view as it may seem to be. Disraeli wrote to a friend on October 23, 1849: "No newspaper is important as far as its advocacy. The importance of newspapers is to circulate your opinions, and a good report of a speech is better than 10,000 leading articles."

† The Cairo correspondent of the *Hindu* (Madras) once wrote that such a habit is prevalent in Egypt also.

opinions readymade from his newspaper than to be at the trouble of arguing himself to conclusions. The following criticism is as true of India today as of the West of which it was written : " One has only to listen to the views expressed in train, tram or club, when some special topic is uppermost in the public mind to recognise a strong family resemblance between them, and often, without knowing it, a man will, in course of conversation, quote exactly or in effect the views expressed in a certain leading article on the subject. Like most subtle influences, newspaper opinion is imbibed subconsciously by the reader, and therein lies its strength." (Low Warren). Newspapers in India are by the very necessities of their vocation and the accidents of politics forced to take prominent part in political controversies, usually of a partisan character ; and this gives their leading articles an importance which their fellows in other countries do not appear to possess.

M. de Blowitz has been credited with the dictum that " one good comment is worth ten informations." A typical editorial article is a critical interpretation of current news. And in order to carry the greatest effect it must be timely, brief, informed, comprehensive and pungent. But various newspapers have various

methods of handling the leading columns : one is for a free trade editorial ; another is of a high protectionist flavour ; one likes invective, the more slangy it is the better ; while yet another prefers dignified and temperate comment on the events of the day. Each newspaper writes to the level of its class of readers. It is therefore of the essence of the leader-writer's craft that he must be able to turn his hand to any subject with equal facility. He is the handyman of the editor, and is not expected to have private opinions on those subjects on which he is asked to express the considered judgment of the paper. He is not expected to have conscientious objections ; for where the editorship does not go with the leader-writing, the journalist deputed to do the latter may well recognise that there is quite as much to be said for as against the particular point he is asked to push home to the reader's mind. The editorial page, as an American critic points out, is the one set aside for special pleading, for partisan views, for distinctive opinions on debatable issues.

An old hand at the game, as Mr. J. A. Spender describes himself, lays down the following as the chief of the mechanical tricks of this highly conventional form of writing. Handle the "we" easily. Have your scale clearly fixed in your mind ; remember what you have written,

be clear what you are going to write; and so write that at the end you will not need to correct more than a word at a time and as few words as possible. The business of the leader-writer is not to provide daily bread, nor yet cake or confectionery. Hence the importance of homeliness and simplicity in style. Next the language must be moderate when your views are most extreme; this according to him is a very good rule when dealing with the English reader. Do not try to exhaust your subject in one article; but bear in mind that on all great subjects it may be necessary to write not one but a thousand leading articles, from as many angles of vision or of approach. Nor should the leader-writer forget the essentially ephemeral character of his writing; this is not to mean license for slovenly expression and all the other unlovely vices of the ill-equipped writer. On the other hand, this is a wholesome caution against too great an overloading of a leading article with abstruse argumentation that the mind of the average reader may not be able to take in and retain at a single reading. Though it may be desirable that leader-writers should be experts in one or more subjects, the conditions of modern journalism are averse to the success of the man who is too well informed, or sets up to be an authority in some special

subject. No one-subject man can arrive in these days in the difficult field of journalism.

It is important to have a wide knowledge of social and political history, especially of our times. The history of the last thirty years, both at home and abroad: this, according to Spender, must be clearly in the mind of the leader-writer. Politics is a hard and complicated subject; and though it is too often regarded as a "safe stand-by" for a leading article, only years of study and observation can make one an expert writer in this special field. The leader-writer must have a good background of subconscious memory; and this can be cultivated only by an alert mind, always sorting and selecting the raw material of politics and life as it unfolds from day to day. That memory has to be long as well as voluminous. The encyclopaedic mass of knowledge contained in the heads of older newspaper-writers gathered, Heaven knows from what corners and dealing with recondite subjects, is really amazing. Charles Dana's remark applies pre-eminently to this class of newspapermen, that he never saw a journalist who knew too much except such as knew too many things that were not true. Next to this comes an elementary grounding in statistics. Too many statistics, it is true, are not easily digested by the average reader; nor are many

leader-writers good "figure-smiths". Yet, one must agree, it is important for writers who are always talking about the public to have a clear picture in their own minds of what the phrase means, to know the facts about its birth-rate and its death-rate, its distribution into classes and occupations, the relative wealth and poverty of its different classes, the relative importance of its different trades, home and foreign. Finally to catch the reader on the wing and make him stop and think is a great art which calls for a high degree of skill and thought.

Finance is another branch of journalistic speciality that may give a man a lucrative place on an editorial staff. According to Mr. Hartley Withers, "the business of the financial journalist is practically the composing of the money article of the daily or the weekly press. In that he has to record what is being done in the money market, the stock exchange and the foreign exchange. He has to keep his eye on everything that may be happening, both at home and abroad, that may have any effect on the money market or the price of securities. He must have a wide horizon and journalistic facility of expression. The financial journalist has to do a bit of everything. The chief editor does not very often stray into alterations and corrections of what is put into the money article, for obvious

reasons. The financial editor, therefore, has to edit his own particular part of the paper and be his own sub-editor. The financial journalist must understand Government finance, reports, balance sheets and all kinds of company statistics." *

We need not linger over the book reviewer or the dramatic and music critic, though these are two other departments of a modern newspaper that partake of the editorial character. Both the dramatic and the literary reviews consist of news more or less critically interpreted, the staging of a new play, the publication of a new play or a new book. Though not so fully developed in India as well they might be, they are among the most desirable departments of newspaper work. Remains then the sports editor. In India today sports is coming increasingly into its own, some newspapers devoting one or two columns a day thereto, while others like the *Hindu* of Madras devote whole pages. Yet it is very perfunctorily edited, consisting of most part of extracts, agency reports and staff reporters chronicling the sporting events of the day in the city of publication of the newspaper. The sports editor like the finance editor will also have to be his own sub-editor ; and there is this to be said of him as about the dramatic and

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music editor that his position can be secured by serving an apprenticeship as reporter. To the other branches of editorial work, a reportership is oftener a disqualification than help. It is the business of a sports editor to have a thorough knowledge of all kinds of indoor and outdoor games and sports ; he must have the qualities of a good reporter joined to those of a managing editor. As Mr. Edwin L. Shuman points out, " he must be equally able to write a good report of an important prize fight, or to supervise the writing of a page story about a horse race that calls out the fashionable society of the city. He has to be careful not to become involved in any of the disputes that attend athletic contests and sporting events of all kinds."

Behind all this activity, and directing everything, sits the mysterious figure of the Editor. In the West, notably in America, the editor-in-chief is also the chief stock-holder and publisher of the newspaper with control over the business office as well as the editorial departments. Quite as often he is the paid servant of a syndicate. The final, entire and legal responsibility is his for every word, including advertisements (as the courts in England have held), that is printed in the journal. This, however, is a relic of the spacious days when the proprietor knew

his place and kept it, and the Editor ruled supreme. But, even in these days, where he has no social or political ambitions of his own and does not seek to oust the proprietor by his social and political successes, the editor has the editorial page under his supreme control and shapes the policy of the paper as he wills, through the editorials he writes or causes to be written. These are days of Big Business ; and even in India the financial outlay involved in the launching of a great modern newspaper tends to sap editorial independence. The editor has generally become a sort of post office between the boss and the editorial staff. To avoid a clash of arms between conflicting interests, according to one authority, the greatest circumspection is necessary on the part of the editor ; and “ the temptation to use one’s paper to advance one’s interests socially, politically, or otherwise, should be studiously resisted. Apart altogether from the fact that too much personal publicity in one’s own paper lays one open to the often quite unjustifiable charge of log-rolling, it is better to leave such attentions to one’s contemporaries—if they are inclined to bestow them, which is not often.” But even so, in spite of the very irksome nature of the position, considering its responsibility to the law and the public, as the leader of a team of journalists and

as the director of the policy of the paper (whether his own or the Boss's), the editor has arduous work to do. It is trying and gives him little leisure. The failure, for one thing, to keep an eye on the various sections of the paper often leads to ludicrous errors and inconsistencies. In the days of what used to be called the Mulshi Peta *satyagraha*, arising out of the Tatas flooding a considerable tract of country in the western presidency in 1921, one newspaper editorially condemned the *satyagraha* as inspired by purely political motives. Yet, the editor of the engineering supplement of the same paper, writing a few days later, saw "no excuse for the dilatory manner in which the Government has dealt with the matter, nor for the somewhat high-handed way in which the Company set to work."

Bernard Shaw, in his characteristic way observed: "Their offices are often prisons in which the cleverest editor will soon lose touch with the world, being cut off as he is from political meetings, scientific lectures, concerts, and even dinners, by the hours during which he has to work." A newspaper man, it has been remarked by Jon A. Cockerill, should have no friends, no social relations, no family. He should live, eat and sleep in his office, and the first time he ventures out of its door should be

hit on the head with a club. Satire or raillery, it may look like; but is a passable summary of the arduous nature of the editorial vocation. Let us not be shy of recalling that, in the words A. G. Gardiner, one of the most accomplished editors of the British world, one to whom many look up as a model and guide, "spoke little in public, wrote nothing under his own name, declined all honours, spent the whole of his long working life in a provincial city, and never had a London residence."

Still such a lack of contact between those who read newspapers and those who direct them is an evil to be deplored. The more so because increasingly in these days it is the proprietor or the trust that controls the policy and the direction of the newspaper, though such a state of things has not yet become common in this land. But, owing largely to the exigencies of our political situation, the journalist has become in many cases overshadowed by the publicist in him. This is much less of a boon either to public life or journalism than the careless may be apt to think. At the moment, we are only concerned with the other danger more and more evident in western journalism; of which the best contemporary description is by Wickham Steed, whose claims to speak on the subject are considerable. He writes: "Most

modern journalists aspire to become editors, sooner or later ; but very few understand the conditions under which an editor now works. The theory and often the practice of editorship is full twenty years behind the times, because the title of editor is still surrounded by the glamour attached to the man who was able to lay down the policy of a great journal, and to tell the readers what they ought to think. Fifty or sixty years ago, when newspapers were printed at 6 a.m., and editors had some leisure for reflection, even after dining with the people who held almost a monopoly of political power, it was possible for newspapers to influence the course of affairs. If an editor made up his mind at midnight, there were still five or six hours ahead of him in which to put his paper into shape while it was being written and set in type by his staff. Nowadays the principle that the final decision belongs to him on all matters of moment may compel him to make a hundred decisions in the course of a hurried afternoon, where his predecessor only needed to make ten. In order to make them he must be on the spot. Otherwise they will have to be made by his assistants, who have not all the threads in their hands, and his control of the paper vanishes. . . . An editor who wishes to control his paper inevitably becomes a prisoner and a re-

clude." * It will thus be evident that the editor of a modern newspaper must be a man of quick and sure judgment, of great executive ability and an equal amount of originality. The qualities of the general on the battle-field rather than of the literary man at his desk are expected of an editor in these days.

CHAPTER VII—(CONCLUDED.)

AT THE OFFICE

We have not referred to the mechanical and business side of a newspaper, because, while it certainly is true that in these days an increasing emphasis is laid on the journalist having working knowledge of the printing methods employed in turning out the daily paper, it is more acquired by practical experience and varies with individual newspapers, their format and their style of doing things. We glanced at the need for this thorough equipment on the part of the sub-editor. It is his business to see to it that the news services, the supply of copy to the printers, the setting of the type and the display proper either to the news or the page, are so organised that the pages are made up and sent to the press in accordance with time tables arranged to meet the requirements of the stereotyping and printing establishments.

The featuring of news and the make-up of newspaper pages is an art by itself; and in spite of variations from office to office is governed by certain well-defined principles. Meanwhile the increasing vogue of newspaper advertisements

induces an element of complexity and sometimes vexation to the sub-editor, whose duty is to make up the formes. Advertisements are not a century old ; in fact there was originally in Great Britain a duty on advertisements, in addition to the duty imposed on each copy of the paper, and payable by the publishers. It may be remarked by the way that the practice of with-holding information as to the price of books under review in magazines and journals is stated to have originated in a desire to avoid the tax on advertisements. While advertisements came in originally as an auxiliary contribution to the upkeep of the paper, to-day they bear the brunt of the financial burden. It is estimated that a modern newspaper is sold at a third of its cost price, and that the other two-thirds plus the profits of the proprietor have to be paid for by the advertiser. Generally the greater the number of small advertisements a paper has, the more likely is it to be independent in its policy. For one of the tragedies of the modern press is the precarious state of its freedom, threatened alike by the law and the advertiser. Subsidies to newspapers take in these modern days the insidious but ostentatiously respectable method of buying up advertisement space ; and not all newspapers are able to resist the commands of the advertisement manager. North-

cliffe realised the danger of "bludgeoning advertisements," and led a campaign against them which created quite a sensation in Fleet Street. Beyond indirect and oftentimes most anti-socially directed influences, that the trading interests have on the policy of a paper, advertisements have very little to do with the art of journalism. Still, trained journalists versed in the arts of publicity are often in demand as writers of advertisements. And very often, an advertiser is kept off because words will not come to him, or, if they come, he does not realise the usefulness of "whites" and so will overcrowd his small space. In that case, the canvasser, if he be a trained journalist, will not only earn the advertiser's gratitude by drawing up copy for him, but add to his own pocket the commission his office may give him for his orders.

It is a typical story of newspaper make-up when Lord Northcliffe told his staff to emulate Sam Isaacs, the fruiterer of Covent Garden. Just as Sam put his best apples in the shop window, so as they may show to the best advantage and attract the passer-by to walk in and inspect the wares, so also the best news has got to be put into the newspaper's "shop-window," that is, the front page or the chief news page, whichever is chosen.

Where, as in India, news is mostly supplied by syndicated agencies, the individuality of a paper is easily seen by the way in which it is made up. Generally the news supplied by the Agencies gets a setting or context prepared for it in the newspaper office. Sometimes it may be merely that enough information is given to make the ordinary reader appreciate the news such, as for instance, the items of related news published recently, or the geographical or personal details or political history that may be necessary to explain the context. A good example is the Reuter message about the Punjab riots, which is featured in the copy of the *Evening News*, which we analysed in the opening chapter. Similarly a line announcing the death of Mr. Eminent Personage may have a context of two columns in which the whole biography of the gentleman along with his special claims to eminence may be dealt with at length. In any well-regulated office this "Cemetery" is the work of a sub-editor specially detailed to the task. Many a subject of glowing obituary notices would be shocked to know of the cool business-like way in which their deaths are anticipated and prepared for by the newspapers. Queen Victoria died on a Monday morning. On the Tuesday morning following, there was a special edition of the *Manchester Guardian* with

twenty pages of pictures, biographical notices, and appreciations of the late Queen from eminent personages. This created something of a sensation and the *M. G.* sold like hot cakes. Of course the event had been foreseen and prepared for. The value of a news-item generally speaking is measured by the amount of public interest centred on it. Much depends, however, and always, on the policy of the paper: the journalist has means at hand whereby any item of news may be artificially boosted up or degraded, aside from its intrinsic importance. It is here that the art of featuring comes to the aid of the sub-editor. An even more important factor is the place where the news is put, and the caption by which the reader's attention is sought to be drawn to that news item.

Giving head-lines is a delicate, but also a risky art, and requires some native talent. The caption artist may also be said, like the poet, to be born. Here also there are conflicting views on what is the correct method. One school will have it that the heading should not give away the news; the other holding that "a perfect newspaper heading is one that tells as much of the news story as possible in the limited number of lines and letters of which it is composed:" to which we may add that the idea is to arrest the reader's attention, whet his curiosity and induce

him to read on. Seldom are reporters expected to give headlines to their stories; one reason being that their "copy" might be completely changed by the sub-editor before it is sent to be set up. It has been pointed out that American journalism has the tendency to abuse, in the interests of a low sensationalism, what is undoubtedly one of the most important features of modern journalism in wise hands.* After satisfying the primary requisite laid down above, the headline may have any number of additional charms. Literary grace, alliteration, assonance, rhythm, crispness: all these the caption artist may aim at. To watch the great newspapers of the world for the manner in which important items are "head-lined" is a perpetual delight in addition to being a liberal education in the elements of psychology. It would clearly be impossible to give examples of appropriate headings when their number is legion. It may perhaps be permissible to mention the way in which the *Daily Mail* once indicated the marvellous increase in automobile transport—"Look, A Horse." The exclamation mark, however, offends a canon of American

* Mr. G. K. Chesterton, smarting under a sense of personal injury, has described the American caption-artist as "a solitary and savage cynic locked up in the office, hating all mankind and raging and revenging himself at random." (*What I Saw in America.*)

journalism as expounded by Mr. Edwin L. Shuman, who observes that a good newspaper seldom uses exclamation points in its head-lines. In an Indian newspaper opposed to the sway of British Imperialism in China, the news editor once received a Reuter message that H. M. S. *Vindictive* was ordered to Nanking. The news appeared under the fine and suggestive caption : "Vindictive at Nanking."

Every newspaper has a definite page for its best news. Dignified and old-fashioned papers use the right-centre page, opposite the leader-page, as their "shop window." The modern popular press favours the front page for the same purpose. It is a psychological fact which is put in application by every news editor that the readers always tend to look at the right side of the upper half of every page first, unless indeed they have been definitely taught to look elsewhere by an individual newspaper. For readers generally like to look at a particular place every day for a particular kind of news. Elsewhere we have referred to the great difficulty felt by the readers of the *Times* on account of the erratic way in which news was formerly arranged by that paper. No paper playing a like trick is likely today to keep in popular favour. Also no one likes to dig a news item out. If it is important

and interesting, it must go prominently featured, that is to say, it must be easy to get at, even if it does not "strike the eye." *

We have spoken of head-lines and the caption artist, and the importance of a proper and attractive contents bill, which is also called the poster. The more intricate question of the make-up of the pages or the formes is an interesting and fascinating subject, requiring a volume by itself. Any one who is asked to prepare a "dummy" or, what is much less, asked to give suggestions for brightening up a newspaper, knows how difficult and delicate are these problems. We shall here indicate the methods of make-up in the briefest possible compass. †

Let us suppose that we are to decide the type and features of a new daily. The first

* News cannot be properly featured unless the paper has a definite and clear-cut policy and the courage to keep to it. Recently, during the civil disobedience campaign in this country, some newspapers, forced into a difficult position on account of the conflict between the tastes of the public and the demands of Government, adopted colourlessness as the editorial policy with disastrous results not alone on leading articles, which became dull and pointless, but also on headlines and the space given to news of a political flavour.

† An excellent, though short treatise on the subject is T. E. Naylor's *The Principles and Practice of Newspaper Make-up* (Raithby, Lawrence & Co., London. Price 2/6.) in which the subject is treated lucidly and authoritatively. What follows is a summary therefrom, by the kind permission of the author.

problem that will confront us is the fixing up of the chief news page. Is it to be the front page or the right centre page? Obviously from the point of view of the reader the front page is the most convenient shop-window. But it is equally attractive for the advertisers, who may legitimately complain that there is no page like the front one for catching the reader's attention. Space on the front page is the most heavily priced, and considerations of revenue must necessarily determine whether that page can be used for news. This raises the question of the proper position of the advertisements: whether they are to have a page or more for themselves, or whether they are to be inserted alongside reading matter; and in the latter case whether they are to be so interspersed in all the pages, including the chief news page. Where the front page is not available, advertisers generally insist that their notices must be linked up with important features. Ordinarily a meticulous observance of the fiat of the advertisement department leads to most unattractive make-up. If, however, the sub-editor in charge of the make-up is given powers of discretion, it is possible to intersperse advertisements with reading matter without marring the beauty of the page. Even then it will be counted a scarlet sin to do so on the chief news

page. As a general principle it is safe to hold that the most important pages are not to be spoiled by bludgeoning advertisements.

Now we come to the question of display. Here again the prime consideration must be the taste of the readers. A certain class of readers resent restrained head-lines, while others abhor a sensational make-up. Nothing however is gained anywhere by dulness or monotony. It is always wise to have a seven column page, which will allow for two double-column features on either side with three single columns in the middle. The middle column can have bolder headings than either of its companions: this arrangement will allow the easy splashing of three important items of news in a striking and efficient manner. And we can have at the centre a three-column block. A 6 or a 8 column page seems preferable from the point of view of a two-column block in the centre. A streamer-line at the head of the news page always presents difficulties. If it is used daily it is apt to lose its value. If it is reserved for extraordinary occasions, the printing department will always be uncertain what to expect; and it may cause the loss of some invaluable minutes. Here again the psychology of the reader is the all-important consideration, and the editor's decision will depend on it.

Is it well to carry over reports from one page to another, and from one column to the bottom of another? Some such arrangement is inevitable, as a pedantic insistence on finishing a "story" in the same page will very often lead to the sacrifice of legitimate "star" topics, as in some Indian journals happens to be the case. This occasions, however, a good deal of inconvenience, and even annoyance in turning up the pages, and one must always try to minimise it. No objection can be levelled against the practice of continuing the story at the bottom of the adjoining column, provided there is no further carrying over. If the matter is continued on another page, every care must be taken to conclude it there.

Then there is the device of dividing the pages with a rule across the full width of the page. While it allows the featuring of more items of news, it will result in more carryovers. It has been urged in favour of this practice that each section can be handled independently, and that it gives an opportunity for easy transposition when important Late News makes a re-make-up imperative. Nonetheless, it is doubtful if it has more points in its favour than against it, except in the case of a page so arranged as to have news on the top-half and leading articles on the lower half—an experiment worth making.

The leader page can have one column of subdued advertisements, three of leading articles, a double-column special article, and a column of social notes or letters from correspondents. The editorial articles will have to be composed in types at least two removes higher than those used for the body of the paper. It is well to have headings for both the leader and the leaderettes. Most of this again depends on the psychology of the reader, which is indeed the first and last guide to make-up. Letters to the Editor will gain from good featuring on the principle that anything worth printing is worth printing well.

A word or two may be said here on the headings. Special display types add to the attractiveness of the make-up, and double columns are desirable. Every newspaper has its own style of make-up; and this makes for symmetry and speed on the newspaper. A double column is best begun by an arresting single-line caption. The introduction of 'lower case' always introduces difficulties about capitalisation, which will have to be solved according to rules or the style of the newspaper. Special attention must always be paid to the less important news in the lower half of every page; and every effort must be made to give these bold and striking (in the sense of expressive) captions.

An important feature of news presentation is the news summary. Some papers in the West have a regular "news at a glance" or "in other pages" feature. In this country some have followed that model by putting at the head of the editorial column in either a skeleton or meagre form or in an amplified form a summary of the news of the day. But this very often causes delay and worry, though it can and is often, as in the Calcutta *Statesman*, made an attractive feature. Where the number of the page is given, care must be taken to see that the numbering is checked. Again, every important item of news, every long news story, will have to include a summary bringing out its most prominent points—a kind of announcement with a flourish of trumpets, the herald going in advance. This is the more necessary where important news is carried forward to another page; or news on related matter appears under different headings, or from different countries. The best type for showing off this summary as different from the actual news story is a matter that depends on the genius of the sub-editor, the type of the news matter and the prejudices of the readers.

CHAPTER VIII

JOURNALIST AND THE LAW

It is doubtless true that "the latest recruit to the ranks of journalism has entered a highly privileged profession." It may be that he has no longer to face martyrdom in defence of the liberty of the Press. But that liberty is defined and circumscribed today in every country, in the West no less than in the East. Modern society is subject to the rule of the law, varying in character with the constitution of the government and the elements of the body politic in which is vested effective political power: and the journalist, who after all is the chronicler of the doings of a complex society, can scarcely move an inch without crossing the lawyer's path. He has this added disadvantage that he has to be a lawyer as he has to be everything else. In subject countries like India, the freedom of the Press is sought to be regulated—that is the phrase—in the interests of bureaucratic administration, while in the freer countries of the West the menace of communism and the interests of "impropriety" help in the necessary camouflage. No wise journalist can, therefore, afford to neglect a knowledge of the law.

The Press in this country was long regulated by two enactments of the Indian legislature *viz.*, the Press and Registration of Books Act of 1867 (Act XXV of 1867) and the Indian Press Act of 1910 (Act I of 1910). The draconian severity of this last piece of legislation has been referred to in an earlier chapter. But it no longer governs the Indian Press and has been replaced by a string of legislation that has outdistanced the Act of 1910 in the matter of severity. These new acts are (1) The Indian Press Emergency Powers Act, 1931, as amended by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1932, which again has been supplemented by the Bengal Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1934, and further amended by the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1935 : (2) The Princes' Protection Act, 1922 : (3) States' Protection Act, 1934 : and (4) Foreign Relations Act, 1932.

Every keeper of a press used for the printing of books or newspapers shall make a declaration before the magistrate in whose jurisdiction the press is situate, and all books printed thereat shall contain the name of the printer, the place of printing and the name of the publisher legibly printed on it. If the printed work is a periodical, the publisher of such work should appear before the magistrate in the area where it is published and make a declaration specifying

the name of the printer and publisher, the name of the periodical, and the place of publication. A fresh declaration would be necessary every time the printer or publisher is changed. A full and complete copy (one or two) of every book printed in a press should be delivered to such officer as the local government may direct for the purpose. Breach of each of the above conditions would constitute a distinct offence, and is liable to be visited with fine or imprisonment as is laid down in Sections 12 to 16 of the Act of 1867. Every keeper of a press, again, has to deposit at the time of making a declaration under Section 4 of the Act of 1867 such sum as the District Magistrate might require, not being less than Rs. 500 and not more than Rs. 2,000.

The Press Act of 1910 cast a very heavy responsibility on the keeper of a press to satisfy himself that the matter printed and published therefrom did not contain anything that would directly or indirectly be considered seditious or as inciting persons to violence or to the commission of crime, or cause disaffection among the Army, the Navy, or bring into hatred or contempt the Government in British India or any of the Native States under British suzerainty. Section 4 of the Act was very wide in its scope, more comprehensive even than the corresponding sections of the Penal Code on which it was

based. Sir Lawrence Jenkins' memorable judgment in the *Comrade* case had been quoted at length in an earlier chapter. "An article may well be beyond the bounds of the Penal Code and yet be drawn into the net of the Press Act. The truth of the facts alleged is no justification, and evidence is not admissible to prove their truth" (4 Cal. 190). Since then the tendency of legislation in India had not been towards the relaxation of the restrictions and the enlargement of the liberty of the Press, but in the contrary direction. The Act of 1931 was professedly an act to provide against the publication of matters inciting to or encouraging murder or violence. Soon, however, by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of the following year, the scope of the act was widened so as to include the "better control of the Press." While the Act of 1931 was to be in force for only one year, its successor extended the duration to three years from 1932; and, in the expiring days of the Montagu constitution the same act had been put on the statute-book with practically no amendment or improvement from the point of view of the Indian Press. The drastic changes effected in the law relating to the Press by the Act of 1932 will be evident from a perusal of Section 4, which outdistances in severity and in sweep both the Acts of 1910

and 1931. In the case of the province of Bengal the list of offences has been further extended by a special act of the legislature of the province. It sets up a sort of censorship, by implication and inference, inasmuch as power is taken under the act to prohibit the publication of certain kinds of information. Any journalist can see to what uses such a power can be put, and how variously the wording interpreted.

Where the local government consider that any matter printed in a press comes under the objectionable clauses, they might by notice in writing intimate to the keeper of the press the offending portions, declare the security deposited in respect of such press, as well as the printed copies containing such matter, forfeit to the government, and after ten days of the issue of such notice the registration of such press would be deemed to have been annulled. Every keeper of a press whose security had been forfeited will have to make a fresh declaration if he wishes to work the press again, and will have to furnish security, not being less than Rs. 10,000, as the district magistrate may decide. If, even after this, the printing of such objectionable matter is persisted in, the local government may, by notice in writing to the keeper of the press, intimate the offending portion and declare that the fur-

ther security, the copies of the publication complained of wherever found, and the press be all forfeited to His Majesty.

The publisher of a newspaper or any periodical containing public news or comments on public news will also have to deposit such security, being not less than Rs. 500 and not more than Rs. 2,000, as the district magistrate might decide, at the time of making a declaration under section 5 of the act of 1867. In the event of the publication of any objectionable matter in any such newspaper, provision is made for penalties as forfeiture of security, furnishing of further enhanced security, and, if the offence is persisted in, forfeiture of all such security and of all copies of the newspaper in which such publication is made. To enable the seizure of all printed matter or newspaper as specified above, the local government is empowered to direct the issue of search warrants and the detention of such matter in transmission by land or sea. Any person having an interest in any property forfeited under the above circumstances may within two months apply to the High Court to have the order of forfeiture set aside; and each such application has to be heard by a special bench of three judges.

The careless reader may think from this formidable array of special legislation that the

ordinary law of the land is perhaps either silent on the point or inadequate to meet the necessities of the case. A distinguished journalist, who had himself for a space been a responsible Minister, recently drew attention to Sec. 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which was as wide as any reasonable opponent of the freedom of the Press might desire. That section itself was a later insertion in the Code, designed specifically to enable the executive to act with speed. Mr. Chintamani maintained that with, but one exception, the magistrates, in every case where the section was invoked, upheld the authority of the executive; and even in the one exception, it was the High Court of Bombay that upset the magisterial decision in favour of the executive. It is the judicial character of these and similar proceedings against the Press that, experience shows, is being fought against by the executive. The pieces of legislation we are now describing reduce the limits of judicial interference to just that minimum that enables the executive to say that the unfortunate journalist has a legal remedy, if he chooses, against the perversity of the administrator.

The States Protection Act, 1934, has made it punishable to bring into hatred or contempt, to excite disaffection towards, the administration established in any State in India. The

procedure for bringing the offence home to the offending newspaper is the same as in the Act of 1931. There had been since 1922 an act on the statute book with the same objective, which has been practically a dead letter but nevertheless still stands unrepealed. * In the debate in the Assembly, during the passage of the Act of 1934, no attempt was ever made to show that the earlier act was in any measure inadequate or that the Indian Press was so entirely inimical to the Princes. But such legislation was in the mood and the tempo of the executive. The events that culminated in Nadir Shah finding himself King of Afghanistan are commonly held to have led to the Foreign Relations Act of 1932. That Act is intended to punish the publication of any matter defamatory of a Ruler of a State adjoining India, or of the consort or son or principal Minister of such Ruler and tending to prejudice the maintenance of friendly relations between His Majesty's Government and the Government of such State.

The editor, printer, and publisher of any newspaper in India have, therefore, to be particularly on the alert and to take special care to

* It was stated in the Legislative Assembly in March 1935 that there had been only one prosecution of a newspaper since February 5, 1930 under the Princes' Protection Act. And it was dropped on the offending newspaper publishing a full apology, which was accepted by the State concerned.

scrutinise the matter sent to them for publication. The net is cast so wide that reasonable diligence and precaution in the pursuit of a hazardous profession may avail either of them nothing when hauled up under any of these enactments. The law relating to sedition and defamation, however, is capable of being understood explicitly and the working journalist may hope to steer clear of it, though only luck and chance, added to his political predilections, can save him from the special legislation. It is advantageous to him, therefore, to have clear ideas as to sedition and defamation.

Defamation is in India both a civil wrong and a criminal offence. An action in defamation in the civil side will render the author, printer and publisher liable in damages. As a criminal offence it is punishable under Section 500 of the Penal Code. The civil wrong of defamation consists in the publication by words, signs, or visible representations of a false and defamatory statement about a person with intent to injure his reputation, without lawful justification. The test of the defamatory nature of a publication is its tendency to excite against the plaintiff the adverse opinions or feelings of other people.

Ancient Hindu law recognised defamation as a criminal offence, but awarded no damages

except where pecuniary loss was proved. But the law to-day makes it both a civil and criminal offence. It is different from wrongful *acts*, which injure reputation (e.g., breach of promise of marriage, assault involving disgrace etc.,) and *words*, which cause damage to a person's property or business, and not his reputation (e.g., injurious falsehood, such as slander of title or goods). It also differs from insult, which is an injury to one's own self-respect; and is not actionable unless it threatens a breach of the peace when Section 502 of the Penal Code becomes operative. Libel is actionable, *per se*, without proof of special damage, by mere publication. That is, the plaintiff in such an action is not called upon to produce evidence to show that he has in fact been damaged by the publication of which he complains. If publication is proved, the law presumes damage.

Under this provision of the law an aggrieved person is armed with a powerful weapon against the Press. Apart from all ethical considerations, the journalist is practically faced with the problem of how best to engage his readers' attention. Time and again he comes into the possession of news which may be of the utmost interest to the public and at the same time may give offence to some powerful personage. It is essential that the journalist should

recognise libel and contempt when he sees either' for decisions on these doubtful and troublesome matters are far better taken in a newspaper office than in a court of law. The law regards the wrong done to a person's reputation as a grave offence. At the same time it has often a lively sense of the interests of the State or the community, which may transcend the interests of the individual citizen. Where the public interests require the exposure of a fraud or the ruin of the reputation of a wrong-doer, the law offers protection. A notable recent case was that of Mr. B. G. Horniman who in his "Bombay Sentinel" wrote strongly against a person who was keeping a bucket shop. The latter took the matter into court, and Mr. Horniman was acquitted of defamation. The Magistrate observed that the editor by his conduct was doing "valuable public service." He added that it would be a serious menace to journalism if an editor could be intimidated by threats of prosecution into silence or acquiescence in the face of a growing social evil. But these special instances are hedged round with very strict conditions, which the journalist must take note of before venturing on adventures of the kind. Experiments in playing the public benefactor at the expense of somebody else are always skating on thin ice or, to vary the

metaphor, trying trick-walking on too fine wire.

The plaintiff to succeed in an action for defamation must prove that the words complained of were defamatory and that they have been published. It is not defamation to write words injuring one's reputation in a sealed cover, which will not be ordinarily opened by any one other than the addressee. It is not publication to dictate letters of a damaging nature to one's clerk or typist, if it is done in the ordinary course of business. Press-copying by one's clerk is not publication, as it has been held to be a merely mechanical process, in which the clerk is not expected to acquaint himself with the contents of the letters he has been press-copying. But it is publication to write the defamatory words on a post-card. Of course the journalist is not concerned with these technical niceties, as publication is the essence of all *his dealings*.

The words must be defamatory and not merely annoying or vexatious. In *Cohen vs. New York Times* (1912) it was held that the publication of a false report of a person's death was not defamatory. The standard of opinion is that which prevails among ordinary reasonable people of the time and place. The standard of understanding is that of the ordinary,

reasonable man, having the intelligence, knowledge, education, experience and prejudices of the average man in the class of people to whom the words are addressed. The words are to be interpreted according to the rule of natural construction. Context, allusion etc., have to be taken note of. "The bane and the antidote must be taken together," per Alderson B. in *Chalmers vs. Payne* (1835). If natural construction establishes defamation, the defendant must show that the persons addressed did not understand it in that manner. It is not enough to prove that no defamation was intended. He may, however, plead a special meaning in the context or a humourous intention, provided he can show that his readers so understood the piece. This regard for context brings us to the next point to be noted: that words of abuse used in a quarrel and vituperative language used in political or journalistic controversy are not defamatory has been held by a Madras bench. In *Australian Newspaper Co., vs. Bennett* (1894), it was held that the following words, used by the defendant newspaper concerning a mistake in reporting a boat race committed by the plaintiff newspaper, were not defamatory: "According to our market street evening Ananias, both Kemp and Maclean won the boat race yesterday: poor little ally noozy." In

Madras Times *vs.* Roger, an attempt on the part of the newspaper to impute bad motives to a strike-leader was not held to be defamatory. However, it is always safe to avoid unseemly language and allegations which cannot be substantiated even in ordinary journalistic or political polemics. If natural construction does not prove defamation, it may be that the words are innocent, or they may have two or more meanings, some of which are defamatory and others are not. In that case, it must be proved that the words were understood in their defamatory sense by those to whom they were addressed.

Broadly, there are three defences for defamation: privilege, justification and fair comment. Parliamentary debates, reports of public meetings and proceedings of law courts are generally held to be privileged. But, to sustain the plea, the publication should have been made without any wrong or improper motive. But this privilege will be destroyed if the printer or publisher of a newspaper, in which such a report appears, refuses to publish a correction or a denial sent by the person affected, as such refusal will lead to the inference that the original publication was from improper motives. Again, it should be noted that it is only the reports proper that are thus

protected, and the like immunity does not extend to editorial comment and criticism thereof. The publication of the proceedings of the Indian Legislature does not seem to be privileged. In 1932 a delicate hint was thrown out in the Assembly that the all-devouring Ordinance could not be limited by the defence of privilege, and that the editors of newspapers should use their discretion in reporting the speeches of honourable members. The question was specifically raised in the shape of an adjournment motion in the Assembly whether the freedom of speech secured to the members by the Government of India Act extended to the publication of their speeches in the Press. Mr. Justice Charles in a famous judgment laid down the common sense view that ought to govern cases of this kind and made remarks that cover wider ground than public meetings. He sensibly ruled "that newspapers did not vouch for the truth of everything contained in the report of a public meeting. What are we coming to, if newspapers cannot report a public meeting without sending emissaries all over the country to ascertain that everything said at the meeting, and accurately reported, is true?" At present a member of the Indian Legislature has privileges in regard to his speeches that are the same as those accorded to Members of Parliament. The Law Member

of the Government of India, on being pressed by the President of the Assembly, gave it as his opinion in writing that "the Ordinances have made no change in the ordinary law of the land in the matter of the publication in the public press or otherwise of the proceedings of the legislature." But, what is the ordinary law of the land, and may not the executive be more precise? When the issue was raised in the Bengal Legislative Council, the Home Member of the province said that they only wanted "to check the publication of these privileged utterances by an irresponsible press in such a manner as to poison the minds of the young men." And Mr. Reid condescended to dwell on the venal arts of the Press. He added: "It was very easy, with all the tricks of the journalist's trade, by leaded headlines, by tactical juxta-positions, by omissions and additions here and there, entirely to misrepresent statements made on the floor of the House in perfect good faith and without the slightest intention that they should be used in that way." Governments in this country then hold that privilege does not appertain to the publication of the proceedings of the legislative councils. This is patently absurd; but, in spite of the written opinion of Sir B. L. Mitter, as Law Member, there is no escape from the fact that

such is the legal position. It behoves the journalist, therefore, to be careful ; except when, for sufficiently weighty reasons, an editor chooses to court a prosecution in vindication of the rights herein involved. A further question of utmost moment arises in our country, namely the reporting of "unlawful meetings." These are beyond privilege, even the publication of notice of such meetings has been held to be a violation of the act ; and care must be taken always to avoid sedition. Extracts from blue books, white papers and other official publications are always privileged, if no malice can be proved. A safe rule is not to drag in matter of a defamatory character from these publications unreasonably or unseasonably ; but when published for its legitimate news interest or for some public end, no harm can befall the newspaper.

The proceedings of courts of justice should be fairly and accurately reported. No attempt should be made to favour one side at the expense of another. A practical hint in all jury trials is that a fair account of the judge's summing-up would cover a multitude of sins. Nor again should the report be unduly delayed. Any delay gives rise to the presumption that the paper is seeking to injure the reputation of somebody under cover of privilege. Raking up

the past is *prima facie* evidence of malice ; and this applies to all privileged publications. In a recent case in the Bombay Presidency, an accused woman made certain statements before a magistrate making offensive allegations against a person, of which a copy was obtained by a newspaper editor and published in his paper. The aggrieved person sued the latter for defamation ; and the magistrate in awarding judgment in his favour stated that the allegations were *ipso facto* defamatory, and did not constitute a report of proceedings in any court of justice. The magistrate made the further important remark that it has been held by the High Courts over and over again that absolute privilege was unknown in Indian law. The claim is strictly confined to Sec. 499 of the Penal Code.

The plea of justification can succeed when the defendant proves that the defamatory statements are true in substance and in fact. It is based on the principle that "the law will not permit a man to recover damages in respect of an injury to a character, which he either does not or ought not to possess." This, however, is always a risky defence: one must not venture into it if one is not absolutely sure of one's facts. The burden of proof rests on the defendant. In a Calcutta case, the judge refused to

accept the defence argument that, because plaintiff was convicted of sedition, therefore he was totally in sympathy with gangster methods, an allegation which the plaintiff successfully held amounted to defamation. It is essential to note that the whole libel must be proved true, or the defence fails, and the plaintiff is entitled to damages in respect of any part that is not proved true. There should be no needless exaggeration, no attempt to twist facts into something they do not mean. But if the main points of a libel be proved, it is not necessary to justify minute details or the terms of abuse used, provided they do not produce any additional effect on the mind of the reader.

Thirdly, there is the plea of fair comment. This applies to the comments made on facts or the allegations of facts. In practice, very often the defences of justification and fair comment are combined in the same case, the former applying to the facts in dispute and the latter to the comments thereon. To establish this defence, it is necessary to prove that the words complained of were a fair comment, free from malice, on a matter of public interest. According to Sir Hugh Fraser, matters of public interest include all State matters, the public conduct of every one taking part in public affairs, legal affairs, the administration of public

institutions and local bodies, places of public amusement and entertainment, literature, art, and, finally, anything which invites public interest or criticism. This is clearly comprehensive enough, and the following extract from Lord Wrenbury's judgment in *Hunt vs. Star Newspaper Co., Ltd.*, shows the amount of latitude given to journalists in respect of the fairness of comment: "The question for the jury is whether the comment is in their opinion beyond that which a fair man, however extreme might be his views in the matter, might make honestly and without malice, and which was not without foundation. It is for them to say whether the imputation was warranted by the facts and honestly represented the opinion of the person who gave expression to it, and that his belief was not without foundation." It will thus be seen that "fair comment does not negative defamation, but establishes a defence to an action founded on defamation" (*Peter Walker vs. Hedgson*). A safe rule is that if one looks after the facts the comment will look after itself. Too great care cannot be taken in putting forward the plea. In the libel case by Baba Gurdit Singh, of the "*Komagatu Maru*" fame, against the "*Statesman*," the defence withdrew their plea of fair comment, but still had examined the plaintiff on the basis of fair comment.

Mr. Justice Cunliffe "considered that the defence ought to pay for this luxury," and accordingly awarded the plaintiff damages and costs. A feature of this case was that plaintiff's name was nowhere mentioned in the article complained of, but yet the article was held to refer to him.

Lastly, there is the question of apology. Whenever a newspaper feels that it has been betrayed into the publication of an unjust or false fact or comment, it should immediately withdraw the allegation and publish an unconditional apology. This may not prevent an action, but will have a vital bearing in the appraisal both of intent to defame and the quantum of damages the newspaper will have eventually to pay up. Even here, for the apology to be effective, it must be shown that the libel was published without malice and undue negligence, and that the retraction was voluntary and at the earliest moment possible in the exigencies of the professional work of the editor.

What constitutes defamation as a criminal offence and what does not are dealt with in Sections 499 to 502 of the Penal Code. The criminal law of defamation is even more far-reaching than that on the civil side. Defamation of a dead person or of a class of persons wholesale may not possibly form a basis for

civil action, but will suffice to sustain a criminal charge. "In a civil action the mere truth of the words complained of is a complete defence, no matter how unnecessarily or even maliciously they may have been published. But in a criminal prosecution the accused must prove not only that the words complained of were true in substance and in fact, but that their publication was for the public benefit."

Ordinarily the provisions of the Penal Code will apply to British Indian subjects. By a special enactment, called the Foreign Relations Act, 1932, the provisions of Sections 499 to 502 of the Penal Code have been extended to the Ruler of a State outside but adjoining India and the consort, son and minister of such Ruler. When the offence of defamation is committed in respect of any of the above persons by any one in British India, there is no need for the aggrieved parties to prefer a complaint; but the Governor-General-in-Council may make or authorise "any person" to complain to the competent courts in British India, who will thereupon be bound to take cognisance of those complaints.

Sedition is in substance a variety of defamation, and in English law is treated as such. A person would be guilty of sedition "if by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or

visible representations or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts excite disaffection towards His Majesty or the government established by law in British India." When seditious matter is printed and published, it is not alone the author but also the printer and publisher that will be charged with the offence. "The registered printer of a newspaper is liable to be convicted for a seditious article which appears in it and cannot escape responsibility on a plea of temporary absence, want of actual knowledge, consent or intention, even if proved." (Ram Nath (1904) P. R. No. 1 of 1905). The intention of a speaker, writer or publisher will be inferred from the language used. It will not, therefore, do for a person to say that he used words or representations without intending thereby to excite disaffection or hatred against the government, if any reading of his article or speech led to that inference. Nor is it necessary that the words or representations should actually result in exciting disaffection or hatred of government. Even an attempt to excite those feelings would constitute an offence, although the words or speeches fall on unresponsive ears.

The word "disaffection" is held to include "disloyalty and all feelings of enmity." (Explanation 1 to Section 124 A.) Different judicial

interpretations of this word may also be noted in illustration and by way of guidance. Disaffection means a feeling contrary to affection, in other words dislike, or hatred (Petheram *C.J.*, in 19 Cal. 44.) It means hatred, enmity, dislike, hostility, contempt and every form of ill-will to government. Disloyalty is perhaps the best general term comprehending every possible form of bad feeling to the government. (Stratchey *J.*, in 22 B. 134.) A different view is taken in the following: "It is a positive political distemper and not a mere absence or negation of love or good-will. It is a positive feeling of aversion which is akin to disloyalty, a defiant insubordination of authority, or, when it is not defiant, it secretly seeks to alienate the people and weaken the bonds of allegiance and prepossesses the mind of the people with avowed or secret animosity to government, a feeling which tends to bring the government into hatred or contempt by imputing base or corrupt motives to it, makes men indisposed to obey or support the laws of the realm and promotes discontent and public disorder" (Ranade *J.*, in 22 B. 156 *F. B.*). Disaffection is a feeling and not the want of a feeling. It is not the absence of affection. It is not indifference but a positive emotion not necessarily prompting the action, but with a tendency to influence conduct just as all our

feelings do. It is not necessarily limited to feelings of enmity. It is intended to express a feeling which can exist only between the ruler and the ruled. Feelings of personal affection in such a connection are not demanded, but only such feelings as the relation of the subject to the government necessarily implies. This relation implies the recognition on the part of the ruled of the government as the government. The ruler must be accepted as a ruler and disaffection which is the opposite of the feelings is the repudiation of that spirit of acceptance of a particular government as a ruler (*Per Batty J.*, in *Bhaskar Balwant Bhopatkar* (1906) 8 Bombay L. R. 421 at page 437). Quite recently, however, a Chief Presidency Magistrate declared that the advocacy by a public speaker of communism as the most desirable form of polity for India did not constitute sedition, and acquitted the speaker.

When an amendment to Sec. 124 A was under contemplation, it was proposed to add the words "or ill-will" at the end of explanation 1. But it was negatived on the ground that "it was only when feelings of ill-will amount to disloyalty or enmity they would constitute disaffection, and that the expression was to make it too wide and vague. It was even remarked by the select committee that a certain amount

of ill-will may be compatible with genuine loyalty." Explanations 2 and 3 provide for the protection of *bona fide* criticism of the measures of government or administration or other action by the government, and that too without exciting or attempting to excite hatred, contempt or disaffection. But the scope of these explanations is strictly limited. "Criticism, though harsh and uncompromising, must be free from the taint of language which is likely to arouse or calculated to engender feelings of enmity, hatred or disloyalty against government (10 B.L.R., 848). Even the "republication of seditious articles from another newspaper, or used as an exhibit in a trial for sedition" will be considered an offence (35 Cal. 141).

Contempt of court is another of those dangers that all journalists must guard against. In such cases, the power is inherent in the High Courts to proceed by way of summary jurisdiction; and both the High Courts in India and the Privy Council in England refuse leave to appeal against convictions for contempt on the ground that the High Courts have exclusive jurisdiction in such cases. Although a newspaper has got the right to publish the proceedings of a court of law it must not comment on them till they are concluded by an entry of judgment. There should be no unfair colouring of the report, no

attempt to emphasise a particular bit of evidence at the expense of the rest. The Calcutta High Court some time back had occasion to decide a rule of this character. From that decision certain conclusions emerge. Whenever there is possibility of appeal from the judgment of a court or a certainty of further consideration by the High Court, any comment on that judgment is erroneous; and even if at the moment no appeal be pending, it will constitute contempt. All such comment, even if it be an approval and not a criticism of the judgment, constituting a trial of the issues by the newspaper, is an affront to the dignity of the court, and the punishment therefor is unconnected with the issue of the judge being influenced thereby. Headlines to daily reports of a case under trial might constitute contempt, should they strike the casual reader as comments, or where they are suggestive of the guilt or the innocence of an accused person generally. A summary of the evidence or even of the submission of counsel only may constitute a grave attempt if it were incorrect or misleading, or if it constituted a criticism of the party's case under the guise of a summary.

The law of copyright in India is governed by the provisions of the Imperial Copyright Act of 1911, which is of universal application

throughout the British Empire. Copyright is defined as "the exclusive right to print or otherwise multiply copies of a literary composition." It applies not only to literary compositions, but also to photographs, pictures, drawings etc., which are the product of skill or labour. An ingenious attempt at Poona some years ago to anticipate news by a few hours led to Reuter's eliciting from the courts a declaration that such was an infringement of the copyright in their news.

So far we have discussed, however briefly, the law of the land as it impinges on the vocation of a journalist. But in his own profession, he works practically without any law or rule, or practice having the force of law as regards hours of work, leave, pay and tenure of office. In England where the profession is organised on a very efficient basis, there are fixed hours of work (though in practice, as every journalist will cheerfully recognise and submit to, this is not insisted on), wages, leave and other regulations. The great desideratum in this land is an organisation, efficient and wide, that will devote itself to the regularisation of the hours of work, the conditions of life, and the salaries and leave of journalists.

CHAPTER IX

CONSIDERATIONS BY THE WAY

Among the many pitfalls that await the journalist is that of being let down either by the perversity of his correspondent or by his own ignorance. The profession of the journalist often tends to banish from his mind the salutary suspicion that after all the men whom he is called upon to criticise may be wiser; that he himself may not be omniscient; and that there may be points of approach to many questions of which he may be or is altogether ignorant.

The mishap arising from the first can always be avoided by careful enquiries. It chanced some years ago that an important political meeting advertised to meet in a South Indian town ended in a fiasco, the speeches of the principal participants being prevented delivery. As it happened, two Madras newspapers published the speeches; while the other newspapers escaped, possibly because they had declared a holiday on that particular date. Even in the case of speeches that are delivered according to schedule, alterations, additions or omissions often occur. In all such cases, it is the duty of the sub-editor to

await a release message from his correspondent on the spot, before he trusts himself to publish them.

A more serious case of a correspondent letting his paper down happened in Madras, when on August 31, 1931, "a correspondent" telegraphing from a hill station stated that the health of a State detenu there was alarming. The newspaper published the message, without ascertaining the accuracy of it; and followed it up by demanding the restoration of the detenu to his former position. Mark, however, what happened. On September 1, the secretary to that personage came out with a message that his master was alright in his health. And again, on September 2, the very next day after this contradiction, came another message contradicting the contradiction. A little circumspection will usually help in the avoidance of such blatant errors.

A famous instance in newspaper history is the Pigott forgeries which need not be retold. Another classic example is when Blowitz let down the *Times*. The Paris correspondent of the *Times* was a very important person, who preyed royally on all the bigwigs on the political stage. Special messengers from the mighty would often be sent to give him news and tactful suggestions. One day there came a man

from Russia, armed with the highest credentials, who whispered in Blowitz's ears that the Tsar had decided to abdicate. Next morning the *Times* faithfully flashed the news and there was not unnaturally great flutter in the European chancellories. Soon, however, the report proved to have no more substantial foundation than the fluent fancy of the authoritative Russian, who took in Blowitz.

We do not know what the *Times* did to Blowitz. But there is at least one instance on record in this country where a newspaper publicly trounced its correspondent, not indeed for letting it down, but for using its columns for propaganda.* In South India, during the first round of the London Conference, a well known British journalist carrying on a subtle propaganda, in the guise of news telegrams, was suddenly pulled up by the newspaper closing its columns against him.

The facile ignorance of the leader-writer is, however, not so easily repaired. When Mr. Russel (as he then was) of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway was appointed to the Railway Board, one important newspaper made the mistake of imagining that the Railway Board found representation also for companies on its membership. The London *Times*, when politi-

* *Evening News of India*, August 31, 1929.

cal partisanship blinds its perception, has a tendency to commit the most ludicrous blunders. And one competent paragraphist in the Press said, about the illustration we shall now cite, that since he "first began to read the newspapers, he did not recall a more complete and more humiliating exposure." A Cardiff newspaper had for years been in the habit of publishing interviews with prominent persons by the "Member for Treorchy," who in fact never existed. The *Times* in a leading extract accepted the interview as genuine and quoted words stated to have been given expression to by Mr. Lloyd George in the course of that interview. The *Times* did not get out of the muddle gracefully when it sought to deny that it had taken the remark seriously.

Should correspondence in a newspaper be necessarily anonymous? This is a question that newspaper editors have to decide; and most of them seem content with a notice to correspondents that the name of the correspondent should be given, "not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith," as the familiar phrasing goes. On this by no means unimportant question, the *Statesman* of March 27, 1931, had some very pertinent observations to make, which it may be worthwhile to transcribe here. "Many correspondents to this

journal still cherish the notion that a pseudonym is more in keeping with newspaper tradition than is a proper signature. The notion is erroneous. Editors prefer to print letters over a signature and the accompanying address. On matters that are not controversial the use of a pseudonym may be merely a matter of taste ; but the writer who makes complaints about public departments or public servants should be prepared to come out into the open rather than to take cover under Disgusted, Paterfamilias or some other well-worn pseudonym." This seems to be admirable doctrine. But, in this country where the accuser is often the judge, where the racial inertia often prefers not to disturb sleeping dogs and where a public conscience is still a matter for cultivation, that is a rule that may have to be violated largely in practice.

But "Letters to the Editor" in a newspaper is a feature that deserves far larger encouragement than is the case in this country. One important newspaper indeed makes a regular feature of them. But the letters chosen for publication suffer from prolixity and too great an infusion of the didactic or the acrimoniously controversial spirit. A page of letters to the Editor skilfully brought together should provide very interesting, stimulating and educative reading. There is at least one newspaper which

offers a prize for the best letter to the Editor. That is a field that deserves exploration in this country. Even in regard to this apparently harmless subject, it seems there can be controversy. Mr. Francis Low, the Editor of the *Times of India*, told a public meeting that the letter of the chairman thereat (Mr. M. C. Chagla) was not published in his paper, because he was not in the public eye and newspapers can only publish letters written by persons who are in the public eye like Mr. Gandhi. Crudely expressed, perhaps: but, certainly it denotes a practice that, where editorial policy, prejudices or prepossessions disturb judgment, is very largely followed in the Press. Still as the *Indian Social Reformer* put it, this notion of journalism "does not necessarily exhaust the whole field. There are some editors who read a letter through and not merely the name appended to it before accepting it or rejecting it."

The demise of *New India* after seventeen years of strenuous existence—most of it as a daily newspaper—must have brought to many minds a question that at one time used to vex Indian journalism. Lord Northcliffe, as we have seen, refused "bludgeoning" advertisements: but his problems were very simple indeed compared to those that faced nationalist newspapers in India in the second and third decades of the

century. It had been pointed out that though *New India* passed the 10,000 limit in its circulation, the first newspaper to do so in India, still it hardly paid its way. The main reason for the loss was stated to be Dr. Besant's stern refusal of advertisements of harmful appeal, and, generally, all those that were non-Indian. This was a position somewhat personal. But, in the early days of the non-co-operation campaign, it is not surprising that the issue was debated on, as if it were really a question of journalistic ethics. The article of the *Hindu* (Madras), repudiating criticisms, was at the time cited as "a delicious instance of non-co-operation exegesis," and may be reproduced here as indicating the point of view of working journalists, who in times of political excitement are easily censured by blind partymen. Said the *Hindu*: "The question has been raised whether this does not inferentially prohibit the insertion of advertisements relating to foreign goods either by foreign or Indian merchants in any nationalist organ professing to act up to the resolutions of the Congress, such as the *Hindu*. We are clearly of opinion that it does not. No paper of high standing and wide circulation can exist at the present time if foreign articles and foreign and governmental agency are altogether eschewed. It must also be well-known that a widely read

daily paper is maintained chiefly by the income derived from advertisements. The paper on which the news and articles are printed is imported from abroad at a very heavy cost. So is the machinery and ink (sic.). People who talk glibly of the duty of the *Hindu* to abstain from making use of foreign goods and of foreign advertisements must, if they are genuine nationalists, face the contingency of not having such a paper at all, if their theory is put into practice.....From the enemies of the movement of non-co-operation and of the national cause no discriminating criticism can of course be expected; but thoughtful well-wishers and promoters of the great national movement now in progress ought to accelerate it by well considered suggestions instead of impeding by factious and visionary ones." Here as in other matters judgment cannot be entered for or against dogmatically, though as usual the newspaper was answered by sneers, innuendoes and even downright vituperation. The demands of editorial policy ought naturally to be supreme. But the point raised by the *Hindu* was never met by critics squarely and honestly.

An example of newspaper enterprise, in providing the public with news in advance of the regular paper may be mentioned. Mr. R. H. Gretton, describing the great Liberal

victory of the year 1906 says: "The modern competition of newspapers for the public fancy turned the political contest into a kind of sporting race. They recorded its progress exactly as they had recorded contests for the America Cup, by coloured lights. At various points, such as the National Liberal Club on the Embankment and the corner buildings in Trafalgar square, magic lanterns displayed the results on huge sheets. But the newspaper organisations fixed rather on the large space of waste ground at Aldwych, cleared by the County Council's improvement scheme, as the ideal spot for the show. Here night by night immense crowds blocked the roadways under a glare of coloured lights and magic lantern beams from half a dozen buildings. The magic lanterns projected names and figures: the coloured rays, too impatient for the process of writing upon the lantern slides, darted blue and red into the air. From one roof blue and red rockets exploded, to carry news to the inhabitants of the heights of the Crystal Palace or Hampstead." *

One of the mortifications of the reporters is the inaccurate speaker whose speeches they lick into shape, but for their pains only get shown up by the speaker as themselves inaccurate or erroneous. And, more commonly, men who hang

* R. H. Gretton; *A. Modern History of the English People.*

about the reporters in order to get publicity for themselves, their views or causes in which they are interested, generally treat the reporters with scant consideration when the latter seek their views on important questions. In all these cases, the reporters have the remedy in their own hands. An Australian writer once told a good story of how the reporters in the Legislative Assembly disposed of one of their chief enemies in an assault made upon them during a debate on the local *Hansard*. Mr. Hay, angry at the abridgement of his speeches, had joined with others in demanding that full reports should be given; and accordingly the reporters granted his wish by printing his speeches verbatim. Here is a sample; "The reporters ought not to—the reporters ought not to be the ones to judge of what is important—not to say what should be left out—but—the member can only judge what is important—as I—as my speeches—as the reports—as what I say is reported sometimes, no one nobody can tell—no one can understand from the reports—what it is—what I mean. So it strikes me,—it has struck me certain matters—things that appear of importance—what the member thinks of importance are sometimes left out—omitted. The reporters—the papers—points are reported—I mean who the

papers think of interest—is reported. I can't compliment the reporters." *

In a previous chapter we have observed that the leader-writer is the editor's handyman and is expected to have no opinions of his own. This raises a large and important question of journalistic ethics that could not be adequately dealt with here. Curiously latitudinarian views prevail both among men of the craft and the general public on this matter. Harold Spender relates the story of a friend of his, "a hard-bitten Scotch journalist, who carried the view that journalism is a branch of commerce, and that the journalist occupies the position of a barrister in a law court, to its logical conclusion by writing a Liberal London letter before dinner, and a Tory leading article after dinner. He always explained to me that he found the order more suitable to the nature of the views expressed. He felt more conservative after a bottle of good wine than before; which confirms the

* *Statesman*, Feb. 7, 1881. A more classic example is that of Prof. Blackie, who never had shown much love for newspaper reporters. At a public lecture, while the reporters were trying to take down his speech, the professor put them at ease by promising them his own manuscript — which he did before the lecture was over. But what was the reporters' chagrin when they found that the script was Greek! They were fairly sold. Soon they had their revenge. The morning papers had an item of news to the effect that Prof. Blackie had delivered a lecture which was all Greek!

general impression that there is a deep-seated connexion between good liquor and enthusiasm for the existing order."

It need hardly be pointed out that this is an effect of the commercialisation of the Press: and were it that these were its waking ideals, journalism could not have furnished such stout hearts in the battle for freedom of thought and liberty of conscience. The fathers of the Indian press were men who believed that "the very soul of the Fourth Estate depended on the conscience of the individual journalist." And they have been justified by their successors, as witness the numerous prosecutions with their thundering sentences that have not made the heart of the Indian journalist quail. In these days it is perhaps true that an increasing spirit of commerce has entered into the profession; but happily it has not touched the men who occupy the "upper storeys" and as such lay down sound traditions. It is perhaps hard and ungenerous and impractical to expect the working journalist to exhibit this austerity; but in the men who guide, direct and mould opinion, the lack of it were an evil to be deeply deplored. For them, as well for those imbued with a sincere love for the profession and who feel a call therefor, the golden rule has, again, been expressed by Harold Spender in these words:

“The only safe guidance for the press is the public interest. Once that is deliberately put aside in favour of profit, then the Press becomes a dangerous trade, to be scheduled, like white lead, under the Dangerous Trades Act and placed, perhaps, under the censure of the League of Nations.”

CHAPTER X.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR JOURNALISM

Those who have thus far travelled with us will realise what an enormous draft on industry, ability and resourcefulness the profession of journalism involves. The art of journalism has progressed rapidly and taken long strides forward in recent years; and it has been accompanied by similar strides on the business and industrial side. The question as to the qualifications required to make the most competent and successful journalist is a difficult one to answer.

Much facetiousness has been expended on the journalist. Lord Morley's story of an aspirant for journalism, whose particular speciality was invective, is well-known. In an earlier page we have quoted from Spender a story told by Jowett. Geo. W. Smalley once quoted the editor of a very popular and successful English journal as saying: "I do not want an excellent writer, still less a thinker, I want a man who can put commonplace ideas into English." The same truth has been put in more vigorous language by Joe Derrick, an editor, who figures in Percy White's novel, "Park Lane." "Benfield," the editor told his friend with a sigh,

“you will never make a journalist. The man with a real journalistic mind is passionately interested in the solemn trifles absorbing the public mind. He venerates the sporting instincts of the race as a religion, is never frivolous enough to attach real importance to the Fine Arts and never wastes his satire on those popular follies which his craft has taught him stand most in need of serious treatment in a thoughtful newspaper. As for philosophy, he abandons that with his Eton jacket on leaving school.”

When we have worked this mood to the dregs, the qualifications of a journalist will still be seen to demand serious thought. First of all and most obviously, the value of being able to write cannot be too strongly emphasised on the young aspirant for journalism, whether he looks to the reporting or the editorial side of the profession. It may sound a truism or a commonplace, almost on a par with the famous witticism at Brougham's expense. Still, as an accomplished journalist has remarked, it is “an elementary maxim seldom practised, seldom carried into full effect, seldom used as it ought to be, seldom accepted by the beginner in its true sense. . . M. Veuillot, editor of the great Paris ultramontane journal, *L'Univers*, one of the most effective writers of his time in the

press, said: 'The journalist who does not write a sentence which does not convey its full meaning to the reader at first sight—a sentence which has to be read twice—does not know his business.' " *

Should a newspaper man have a college education and take a university degree? It is a difficult question to answer. It must be acknowledged that the number of young university men in Indian journalism today is much greater than at any time in the past, and there is a steady flow from the universities to journalism. One must not, however, forget that the majority of newspaper writers, like the majority of readers, have not had a college education. It is a reasonable proposition that, with a fairly good high school education, an omnivorous and thoughtful reader can teach himself most of the book knowledge he will need beyond that. Further, an important drawback in the case of university men in India is that they will have to unlearn many things before they could usefully learn anything of value in journalism. This is due partly to the character of the teaching imparted in Indian universities, divorced from the realities of Indian life and thought, politics and economics. J. A. Spender has noted how in his day history at Oxford ended with

* George W. Smalley in "*Harpers*" for July, 1898.

the Reform Bill of 1832 ; and he recalls his tutor who one day told him he had a head-ache and hoped he (Spender) would not excite him by talking of anything later than the French Revolution. University education has had no bolder or more uncompromising champion than Charles Dana, who was a boy in a dry-goods store in Buffalo for a number of years. His point was that the newspaper man should know if the theology of the parson was sound, if the physiology of the doctor is genuine and whether the law of the lawyer is good law or not. Ambitious as this is, one may put forth the demurrer that a sound university education by no means helps a journalist in all this. Dana was a firm believer in the efficacy of Latin and Greek, on the ground that those who studied the roots of the language could write purer and better English than those who had not. The soundness of this reasoning cannot be questioned. Its usefulness again is limited to the fields of editorial writing and other critical branches. Even here it is easy to overvalue a university degree. Horace Greely maintained that the only way to learn journalism was to "sleep on newspapers and eat ink."

Mr. F. J. Mansfield of the *Times* has underlined the absolute importance of preliminary training and experience for one who takes

his seat in the sub-editor's room of an important journal. In the course of a long experience, he says, "I have seen a pathetic procession of men sometime straight from a university, who have fondly imagined that they could perform sub-editorial functions without such a probation, but who, in the stress of the night's work, have been left philandering, hopelessly out of the struggle, and in a little while have ceased to adorn the table. It is true that many can write for the newspapers without the training I speak of, but that any can pass the test of the sub-editor's room without it, I emphatically deny." (*)

The intricacies of modern newspaper production on its literary or news side, the technical or the printing side and the management being what they are, more and more that journalist will go farthest who has executive ability superadded to professional equipment. The university men who drift into editorial offices may reach even the head of the news and allied departments; but in the majority of cases the most lucrative position, that of editorial management, will perhaps fall to the lot of the reporter who had never gone to college, but whose work in the office, with flair for news and insight into the public mind and its wants, eminently fits

* *The Making of a Journalist.*

him for high executive responsibility. Knowledge never comes amiss to any professional; but no amount of mere information, beautifying a leading article, will compensate for the lack of executive ability.

Edwin L. Shuman observes that the intellectual snobbishness that sometimes sticks to the university man all the rest of his life is a handicap in newspaper work. He adds: "The proper education for a man intending to enter journalism is the ordinary education of a cultivated man. All the knowledge he can assimilate on every known subject is what he needs. A broad reading of good books in literature, history, politics, and political economy, will be valuable to him. Whether he does his reading in a college, or during his evenings at home after the day's work, there are certain books with which he cannot be too familiar. Chief among these is the Bible. Considered merely as a model of simple and elegant English and an exhaustless store of vital human truth, there is no book that will better repay careful and constant study than the Bible. Its anecdotes and imagery, and its language have become the warp and woof of civilised thought and life. Next to the Bible, a familiarity with Shakespeare will have the most universal and permanent value to the writer. It would be well too

if every newspaper man would begin his career by reading Milton's majestic speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, which is the most eloquent plea for a free press ever penned."† Dr. Russel, an old editor of the *Scotsman*, would also like the beginner to read three books, the first of which is of course the Bible. The other two are Watt's Hymns, and the Pilgrim's Progress. Smalley in giving a piece of practical advice to the young writer of English, says that lucidity, simplicity, directness are the qualities of style the young writer must try for. He would say to him: read French and not German. And read Pascal above all the other great French writers. Pascal is singled out, because as a critic observes, his "most celebrated work was thrown into the form of fugitive letters" and again he conducted an abstruse controversy in a form that made it "intelligible to the fashionable and popular reader,"—pre-eminently the art of the journalist. Others would also add Addison and Defoe and Cobbet, though the last was not free from the habit of invective. These lists after all are not exhaustive; and vary with the individuals who compile them.

Their object, however, is to give the careful and painstaking student command of the most

† *Practical Journalism.*

direct prose possible. And he ought by careful education to avoid the faults of writing picturesquely, using slovenly or slipshod style, the vice of abstraction, the easy lapse into what is called jargon or too frequent a use of the "boss" words and the misuse of similes and synonyms. And for one who aims at high editorial writing, the most indispensable equipment is a thorough knowledge of the constitution under which he lives, and a working knowledge of current political, financial, economic and other controversies.

Should the journalist have a knowledge of shorthand? Opinions differ on this subject; yet there need be no hesitation in stating that today shorthand is not an essential part of the reporter's equipment, though it may come in useful. It is not writing, nor does it tend to the making of good writers. In America, one reads, "when it becomes necessary to take down a speech in shorthand the large city papers employ professional stenographers for the purpose." Even in England the increasing vogue of the half-penny paper has made the people impatient of long reports of speeches. When Sir Isaac Pitman, the inventor of the most successful system, died early in 1897, the question was debated if shorthand with its verbatim reports of speeches clarified politics. The concen-

sus of opinion inclined to the view that while shorthand had a firm foothold in commercial life, the system had already seen its best days for newspaper purposes. To a reporter its value is merely incidental. It may be a valuable convenience, but in America at least it is held doubtful if it would pay to take a special course. While most English journalists seem to hold the view that shorthand is an essential equipment of the journalist, they are united in condemning the tendency to use it on every occasion. The great thing is to employ it with discretion. "Make shorthand your slave: never let it be your master," sums up Mr. Low Warren. The like divergence of opinion does not manifest itself in laying down the dictum that ability to use the typewriter is in these days increasingly demanded of the journalist. Even if he does not easily learn to get his thoughts flow on through the keys of the typewriter as readily as through the pen or the pencil, the gain in time for both compositor and proof-reader by reason of the clearness of the copy is alone worth the cost of the machines.

There are those who believe in the maxim; being at the beginning. . But it is very questionable if a journalist who aspires to get to the top of the profession does well to start from a reportorial position. We have already seen

that the qualities which make a good reporter are not the same as those which make a good editor or leader-writer. In his "Notes on Journalism," couched in terms of judicial reserve, Smalley discusses the way to the top of journalism, and says: "So far am I from thinking that the work of the reporter or the interviewer is helpful toward the higher journalism in its literary branches that I would wholly discourage any promising and really ambitious beginner from accepting any place in any office which required of him to collect local news or to report speeches. There will always be men to do that kind of work. It is perfectly honourable when honourably done, but we are trying to find out how a man may fit himself for the highest places and the highest duties in journalism, and again I say the training of a reporter is not the best training for the highest places. To explain what I mean I will take strong cases—exceptional cases if you like. The modern reporter of sensations must, for example, approach a good many people on subjects which concern them alone, perhaps in painful circumstances and often in a way which he will find it hard to reconcile with his own self-respect or the dignity of his profession. He will be expected to force his way, to ask impertinent questions, never to take no for an answer, to

consider nothing sacred, nothing impenetrable to his curiosity." He then launches two maxims. "I would say to the young journalist who aims at distinction and usefulness and the upper stories two things, neither of which concerns the reporter of the kind I have described: (1) As a journalist, or for the purpose of newsgathering, never go to see anybody. (2) Never ask a question. The maxims, paradoxical as they may seem, may be followed faithfully by a journalist with such an ambition as I credit him with. He may sometimes depart from them rarely, however, and always for a reason. But if he cares to have access to the best sources of information, and to earn the confidence of those men in public life whose acquaintance will be of most use to him, he will find these rules golden. He may at any rate abide by them in correspondence, which is a different matter from reporting." *

We may sum up this part of the discussion in the words of one, who for more than twenty years had been closely connected with journalistic work, ranging from the onerous responsibilities of printer's devil to the honourable labour of an editorial chair. "The qualities most needed for success in journalism are an alert mind, an intuitive judgment of news values,

* *Harpers'*, July 1898.

industry, honesty, tact, patience, resourcefulness, and a liberal knowledge of the world and of human nature. The ability to score a 'beat' will be appreciated more highly than the ability to read ten languages. A patient plodder who can be depended on will fare better than a brilliant writer who is unreliable. The man of intemperate habits no longer has a place or a chance in the strenuous world of metropolitan journalism. The reporter who imagines it is smarter to 'fake' a story than to work hard and get the facts will fall by the wayside. Success follows the man whom a lie cannot deceive and who scorns to resort to deception himself. Fertility of resource, self-confidence, quickness of perception and expression, and a power to absorb and retain knowledge of every kind are among the most important qualifications for newspaper work. Personal magnetism and tact count for more than depth of learning. A college education is valuable, but by no means indispensable; often the greatest value lies in the self-confidence it inspires. The ability to get at a piece of news in spite of all obstacles is prized more highly in a newspaper office than a mastery of the finest literary style, but the reporter who can combine a breezy and pleasing style with the ability to 'hustle' is the one who will get the best assignments and the speediest promotion." *

* Edwin L. Shuman : *Practical Journalism*.

CHAPTER XI

THE POWER OF THE PRESS

The Power of the Press? What does it mean? Does the Press in our modern days possess any power? And, if it has, is it exercised with any regard to the public interest? Is it right that an irresponsible agency like the Press, more and more getting under the control of giant trusts or great capitalists, should have such power to sway the public? These are questions of pith and moment; though the safest answer seems to be that it all depends.

It is certainly truer today than when it was written (1893) that "the best work of men able to write good prose will go even more than it already does into the form of general literature—reviews and newspaper articles." The better and more desirable side of what is called the power of the press is thus described: "It may be a century or more before the world at large is Europeanised; and before all its countries are brought under pretty much the same conditions, so that local dialects, costumes and customs will have disappeared; but every change in this direction is increasing the capacity of the daily press to deal adequately with what the public

cares to know. This is perhaps the least noticed instance of the way in which the Press supplies a want anciently catered for in a less ephemeral manner ; but of course it has supplanted governments for the ascertainment and propagation of authentic news ; and its statistical summaries are practically what the commercial world goes by. All this is so completely within the domain of a newspaper that it seems impossible to regret it, or even to cavil at it. That significant or interesting facts shall be freshly put before the notice of all is bound to be an important factor in progress. It must be remembered, however, that it is not only new facts which are best disseminated through the newspaper or the magazine. Journalism is the most efficient if not the only real medium through which new thoughts pass into circulation. So popular a measure as Free Trade might perhaps have been carried anyhow, but was carried ten years sooner than it would have been, because the press gave opportunities for discussing it fully. So abstruse an idea as Hare's, of the representation of minorities, would probably be as forgotten by this time as Harrington's theories, if the press had not from time to time revived it for controversy or advocacy. A thinker, like Hobbes or Harrington, would have gained little in immediate notoriety by writing for the *Mercury* of the

day; and would have lost everything in permanent consideration. At present, there is no man contemplating any immediate reform, who may not reasonably balance in his own mind whether he will not exert more influence through a newspaper with a large or an influential circulation than through a book. If he is important enough to be assured that the press will discuss his book adequately, or if his subject is too complicated and vast for newspaper articles, he will naturally prefer the less ephemeral form. . . . If like many authors he lives to some extent by the pen, the attraction of journalism is incomparably stronger. A list of really successful books that have paid nothing or very little to their authors would include some names of distinction, and many men who might have done reasonably well if they had put their thoughts into an ephemeral form." *

But lest the reader should run away with this writer's contagious enthusiasm, I may state that a stimulating pamphleteer of more recent days wrote (1911): "The daily press used to be regarded as the great organ of public opinion. It still has great power in moulding and educating the popular will; but it would seem that the great London papers at any rate can no longer claim to speak with authority in the

* Charles H. Pearson: *National Life and Character*.

name of the electors. It must be presumed that the opinions they express are acceptable to their readers; perhaps their readers are no longer as influential as they were; perhaps the proprietors are less anxious to be in sympathy with the public than to advance their own political ends; in any case it is significant that in 1906 almost all the great London papers were on one side and the voters in London as elsewhere upon the other." †

Lord Oxford makes a similar observation in his *Memories and Reflections*. "The Scots are, and always have been, great newspaper readers, and being a political race, take their leading articles seriously. I was for over thirty years member for a typical Scottish county, and during almost the whole of that time the Home Rule question was, directly or indirectly, the chief issue in the arena of controversy. The two great Scotch newspapers, each of them with a long Liberal tradition—the *Scotsman* and the *Glasgow Herald*—were throughout ardent supporters of the Unionist cause, and I myself was one of their principal targets. Yet, at election after election, my own polling figures rose, and, what is more important, a substantial majority of the electorate remained immovable and impenitent Home Rulers."

† *Vox Clamantis*.

This would seem to lead to the conclusion that the power of the Press, if there be such a thing, is a power negligible. Yet, in their powers of selection, emphasis and suppression, the newspapers wield a terrible weapon; they can vulgarise the public mind, a fact pointed out by Lord Morley when he denounced newspapers as huge engines for keeping discussion on a low level. Mr. J. A. Hobson in rather carefully chosen words says that "it is not too much to say that the popular press has gone far towards destroying the human value of two generations of popular education by turning the three R's and their miserable adjuncts to the most degrading uses. To charge it with a conscious conspiracy to capture and degrade the popular mind, so as to weaken all popular movements of political and economic reform would be, however, to misrepresent the workings of the forces of reaction. No such clear purpose animates the owners and controllers of our Press. The degrading work they do is the product of a number of separate considerations never gathered into any unity of purpose. It is a labour of 'undesigned coincidence.' " * Another side of this fear was expressed by Bryce when he wrote to President

* J. A. Hobson: *Democracy After the War*. The entire chapter headed "Spiritual and Social Reactionists", is worth turning.

Eliot of Harvard that "the power of the Press seems to be the greatest danger ahead of Democracy." It seems, therefore, that the power of the press is a reality; though it may be exercised in a manner not always to the public interest or in ways not in keeping with the intrinsic importance of the issues raised.

"The luckiest man in London," writes R.D.B., in his Diary, under date October 9, 1900, "is Tommy Dewar (now Lord Dewar) who has won St. Georges in the East by a record majority and all through a horse. He has told me the secret. He had not a chance when he was adopted on short notice. Straus, the Liberal candidate, wagered to him one to four on himself. One day last week, a deputation of four men, representing Tower Hamlets costers, waited on Dewar. They were all dressed up in their best clothes, covered from head to foot with pearlies. They were not interested in aliens or deceased wife's sisters, but wanted to know if Dewar's horse, Forfarshire, had a chance to win a good race at Newmarket. Dewar, being a Scot, was wary. He lectured them on gambling, but they persisted. Finally in desperation he gave way and pledging them to secrecy tipped Forfarshire to win. The next day his agent said the whole constituency was on Forfarshire. The costers had spread their tip, and

Dewar was in despair. He was not at all sure of his horse, and if he lost his chances of election were worse than ever. Finally on Thursday, after a fever of anxiety, Dewar was afraid to open his telegram—the horse won by four lengths, and on Saturday Mr. Thomas Dewar was enthusiastically elected.”

Norman Angell has a similar incident to relate in his “Public Mind.” Seriously thinking of getting into Parliament, Sir Norman sought the advice of an experienced electioneering agent, who enlivened his discourse with illustrations. X. Y. Z. had won a neighbouring constituency—call it A—quite astonishingly; and what is more, no one could dislodge him from his seat for a long time. What was the secret of his marvellous victory? Miss T. was the most famous native of A., and she was a music-hall star. Every Tom, Dick and Harry in the constituency knew all about her, and A. was proud of her. X. Y. Z. married her and lo and behold! the miracle was effected. The star canvassed actively for her husband, and helped him on every platform. Four political opponents, who would have scorned to attend any of his political meetings, were anxious to hear Miss T., and began to waver in the faith of a lifetime. After all, people began to argue, he was her husband and that was something. More-

over, he had shot two goals against an opposing football team recently. Ergo, the interests of the constituency were safe in the hands of X. Y. Z.

Both these election stories are symbolic of a dominant note in modern politics. The voice of the people bloweth where it listeth, and neither rhyme nor reason governs its direction. Lord Dewar and Mr. X. Y. Z., may be excellent men, and their constituencies may have shown exemplary political wisdom in returning them to Parliament. But these considerations never weighed with the electors; one gained the seat on account of a horse, and the other on account of a lady. In both cases, what ought to be the real issue of the polls, the political and economic policy advocated by the contending candidates, was completely lost sight of. The populace voted on thoroughly irrelevant considerations. And herein lies the danger of democracy. The mass of voters are incapable of reasoning, and as the art of government grows more and more complicated, demanding more and more of technical knowledge, *vox populi* is apt to become the voice of any one, who has the will and the means to seduce the people.

This problem is raised in an acute form by the methods of the popular Press of today. Asquith has noted that there is "abundant evi-

dence both during and after the War that, when public opinion is nervous and unbalanced and when the diverse ephemeral interests which in quiet times are the stock-in-trade of contemporary journalism are overshadowed for the moment by national and international emergencies, a Press which distorts or suppresses facts, allows itself to become the instrument of personal and political intrigue, and uses its power over uninstructed minds to manufacture or manipulate opinion, may become a potent and even a poisonous engine of mischief." Another critic has noted "the crushing power of the Press in material issues," and in stifling freedom of speech and discussion. Bernard Shaw in a letter to *Time and Tide* said that the business of a journalist is "news and not political philosophy." He continued: the people cannot endure "the pompous oracle with nothing to say, the noodle's oration, the twaddler's pulpit platitudes and the ranter's tirade. They prefer snippets because the snippets are really much better. But let any one come along who can supply the real thing and the public cannot have enough of it." Here seems to be the voice of the optimist. The promoters of popular education in the last century imagined that literacy was synonymous with culture, and that it was lack of opportunities that kept the great majority of

mankind from leading a life of high thought and aesthetic raptures. We had, instead Newnes and Northcliffe in England, Hearst and Pulitzer in America. It might have been an accident which led the newly educated masses to the penny novelette and the snippety weekly, and thus laid the foundations for the amazing superstructure that the makers of modern popular journalism raised. The man in the street was accustomed to buy the evening papers for sports and racing tips, and kept the Sabbath holy by reading a rag-out of murders, robberies, assaults, divorces, police court news and numerous salacious bits of what is miscalled 'life.' The political and moral consequences are easily appraised.

The raw material of journalism is the public mind, and the practice of the art is a constant exercise in mob psychology. Looking on modern newspapers as a whole, one finds that they are based on an acute distortion of values. Anything that can excite the far from cleanly waters of the public mind is valuable, and by the same token all the serious issues of life, all the complicated problems of civilisation, and all things that provoke thought, are of no value. Sir Norman Angell once pointed out the ordinary reader of *Answers* is interested in knowing the quantity of paper consumed in printing currency notes in a

particular year of grace, and even the amount of fiduciary issue; but if you go one step farther on and try to speak about the relation of currency notes to the reserve, and the meaning of inflation and deflation, then you are no longer wanted. You have raised a problem and become a bore. Everything is sacrificed at the altar of sensation and stunt. The shifts to which the harassed news editors are reduced in their ceaseless quest after talking points would be amusing if they did not have so tragical an effect on the popular taste. Mr. George Blake, whose pamphlet is worth a dip by any reader interested in this portion of our subject, gives us some typical examples. In nothing perhaps is the triviality of taste, vulgarised by the popular press, so apparent as in the pages of social gossip which try their best to make the world safe for Snobocracy. And one writer arrives at the dispiriting conclusion that the social column "provides opportunity for the rich cad to posture and the suburban cad to admire and emulate."

None can be blind to the facts. There has been a notorious vulgarisation of taste. The extent to which journalists are prepared to go in search of the "human touch", or indeed of good copy of any kind is simply astonishing. Like vaulting ambition, it often overreaches itself,

and produces the inhuman, brutal touch and much execrable copy. Jaded nerves nevertheless seem to be unaffected. A mining disaster or a railway accident, or a murder, or an unusual death of any kind is "worked up" in truly abominable fashion. The widow of the miner or the murdered man is photographed, and all her incoherent grief is served up for public consumption. Mr. Alderton Pink has analysed the method in which copy was made of an artist, who committed suicide through infatuation for a model. She was interviewed, of course, and nothing was considered too sacred from the profaning touch of blatant publicity. The death of Sir Henry Seagrave on the Daytona Beach was featured in all its gruesome details, and the Press was not above publishing the interesting adventures of a self-confessed smuggler of liquor into the United States, Captain Randall of "I'm Alone." To crown all these instances of debasing of tastes, Mr. Pink quotes in his book an advertisement beginning with the illuminating philosophy: "Over-indulgence is no crime, and it is folly to suffer for every little indiscretion," and so on.

To add to the various arts by which the masses are wooed by the newspapers, we have the innumerable attractions of competitions, free insurance offers and gambling tips that

have become an essential feature of the journalism of the day. Swollen circulations depend ultimately on the triviality of taste and the attractiveness of the gambling tips found: but swollen circulations mean a mighty power to control public opinion. True it is that, even in the morning hours of the present century, "the idea of newspapers as guides of public opinion had in reality long ceased to be true to facts; they were symbols rather than guides, and men read them to find grounds for their established convictions, or even prejudices." In pandering to these and thus helping "to divert the mind from dangerous processes of thought," the newspapers exercised a malignant influence on the public. Lord Northcliffe at the height of his success was possibly the most powerful man in England. He was able to dictate political policies; but his power was thoroughly irresponsible, and he was answerable to no one, and owed that power to considerations wholly remote from politics. Dewar won an election through a horse, X. Y. Z., through his wife: and Northcliffe could dictate because of free insurance offers, sensational stunts and prize-winning competitions. The most notable and at the same time the most disquieting manifestation of that power was when, by a series of unedifying intrigues and a suspicion of worse

things, Asquith was dethroned in the midst of the War. The affair did not pass without comment then or since. Mr. R. H. Gretton has pointed out that "the strong public opinion in its support had been too openly organised by the determination of a powerful owner of newspapers to effect a change, and put the man of his choice at the head of affairs; it was a very ostentatious proof of the ease with which a vast newspaper-reading public could be manipulated."*

The deadly power of the modern press is due to the half-baked intelligences to which it caters, and which happen to be, nominally at least, the rulers of the world today. And the share of the press in debilitating public intelligence and public taste is a notorious fact. The enormous increase in newspaper reading, the only reading that a vast majority of literate persons now permit themselves, as one observer has said, has strengthened and confirmed the modern habit of keeping a very short memory for public events. "With the whole world brought freshly to their breakfast tables each day by the incessant activities of the telegraph, men lost much of their sense of continuity; editors could hardly publish a paragraph on some affair of a month or a fortnight previously

* *A Modern History of the English People.*

without a foot-note to explain the reference." Mr. George Blake has described for us the extraordinary campaign the *Daily Mail* carried against the patent medicine "Yadil" with remarkable immediate results. And he contrasts it with the non-success of a political campaign by the same newspaper, clearly indicating thereby one of the limitations of the power of the Press. The campaign against Yadil might have been legitimate, though there is seldom a straight exposure of a fraud; the authority of the paper did not extend to persuading Great Britain to the elegant gestures of the slogan of "Hats off" to France or Hungary. The Press creates a mass of popular beliefs; and we shall be better able to understand the *modus operandi* of popular beliefs if we could trace one of them to its source. Mr. Pink has analysed the origin and progress of the craze for sun-bathing in a most illuminating manner. First, research workers found that sunlight is a cure for rickets and surgical tuberculosis. The intelligent layman accepted it on authority, and became a sun-bather. Newspapers got hold of the idea and effectively vulgarised it; for sun-bath and the resultant photographs (how can the bathers escape it?) provide an easy excitement to the jaded, industrial workers. The journalist was seconded by the businessman who saw in ultra-

violet lamps and in special window-glasses a chance of exploiting public credulity. Thus huge numbers of people who have no reasonable grounds for believing in sun treatment, and who have not even read the medical evidence on the subject, become convinced they are storing up vital energy for the winter if they can tan their bodies a mahogany brown by a fortnight's exposure to the sun in August. Here was a strikingly successful piece of educational work carried out in a short time, in which the reasoning or critical faculty played but a very small part, if at all. The process was initiated by creative intelligence: it was assisted by the response of the rational few acting on authority, and was completed by mass suggestion. *

It is during war that propaganda shows its worst side. Under modern conditions no war can be carried on without the effective support of the civilian population, and at least the forms of democracy have to be observed. War creates certain psychological necessities, and they have to be skilfully satisfied. To many the opportunity to hate another may itself be sufficient. Mr. Kipling wrote at the beginning of the War, the people of the world may be conveniently divided into two classes, human

* *A Realist Looks at Democracy.*

beings and Germans: and that was enough for most. Still, it is always best to ensure that your people as well as the neutrals believe that your enemy is the aggressor, that you are defending ideals, and that all the world holds sacred can only be saved by your victory. To add spice to the propaganda get hold of some juicy atrocity stories, and the trick is done. The Bolshevik may have sins to answer for, but they deserve the thanks of everybody for letting bright daylight into the dark doings of the diplomats for the last fifty years. In fact it was the publication of the Russian archives that queered the pitch of Allied Propaganda, and enabled the world to pierce through the dense cloud of lies that both sides had been raising. It is hardly necessary to refer to the part played by newspapers in poisoning international relations during (as well as before and after) the Armageddon. Even faking photographs of alleged atrocities was a profitable occupation during the War. In a post-War revelation, we see step by step the whole superstructure of hate and indignation rising, as if by a miracle, on the shifting and treacherous sand of falsehood.

Thus by its three-fold powers, aided by the indirect appeal of the leading article, the newspaper of today can create formidable waves

of public feeling. It has obtained this coign of vantage by shamelessly pandering to the vulgar tastes of the semi-educated and tickling their inveterate gambling and other lower instincts. It is answerable to none, and holds its tremendous powers entirely without responsibility. To crown all, very few among the masses realise this position. Well may Lowes Dickinson describe this strangest of all our mechanisms, one which directs and controls the mind of man as a "monster" against whom all are powerless. "For a single puff of its nostrils blows away into space the best thoughts of the wisest and most experienced men."

It is essential for the safety of democracy that power such as this should not be concentrated in the hands of one or a few, but should be widely diffused. That was the case in the England of the days of Queen Victoria. Today however the Press is tending more and more to lose the independence born of healthy rivalry. Big Business has found out that newspapers with multimillion circulation are a means also of big dividends; and it has in the West practically captured the whole of the modern Press. Running a newspaper is a great and risky gamble. The initial outlay and the running costs for the first year are so great that none but the Napoleons of finance can afford to

play the game. The result is the alarming rapidity with which the movement for the "trustification" of the Press is going on. The millionaires deal with newspapers as they do with oil or rubber or wheat or meat. Only here they come into direct contact with spiritual or imponderable values and distort them for their own purposes. The Press Barons attempt to dictate policies to the government. Northcliffe set up Lloyd George as Premier by a vigorous campaign in his newspaper: Haldane was hounded out of office by an ignorant and credulous press. Mr. Baldwin once told us that the conditions laid down by the chief proprietor of the *Daily Mail* for his support included a provision whereby the nominations for certain portfolios in any potential Conservative Cabinet were to be submitted to the Northcliffe House in the first place. Northcliffe was a man of genius; and, whatever view one may take of them, had ideals. What was tolerable though ominous during his regime may become a serious danger to national and inter-national peace under less talented millionaires.

In dictating its policies Big Business is swayed by the dominant consideration of the pursuit of profit. It frequently means humiliating subordination to those who swell the advertisement revenues. In the present circum-

stances many have, therefore, begun to doubt whether the doctrine of the Freedom of the Press is not one leading us to tolerate evils that are day by day growing to be a formidable menace to civilisation itself. Some indeed would have the State, "in its capacity of trustee of national education," step in and correct the license of the Press by stopping the trade in brains to be used to pander to the crudest desires of the mob. With less responsibility the State, it may be argued, interferes in the field of education and dictates both curricula and the duration of courses of studies. But, alas, it is often the case that the State interferes too often with the Press, not because it feels itself trustee for national education, nor even because it feels that the interests of social and political peace and order are gravely jeopardised. On the other hand, and in practice, the State interferes with the Press because it has a policy and purpose of its own, most often opposed to the interests, the rights and the liberties of the citizenry. When, under plausible argumentation, the world allows its Press to be controlled by the State, it shall have exchanged King Log of the Press for King Stork of the State, who hates both the Press and the individual insisting on his rights with an equal and impartial hatred. Mill's ideal of Freedom of

Thought is doubtless menaced seriously today by the Napoleons of the Press quite as much as by those who seek to rid the world of the influence of a wholesome Press. It is rather the hope of the future that some means should be discovered, as Max Nordeau long ago wished, to bring home a sense of responsibility to the self-elected moulders of public opinion.

CHAPTER XII

CONDITIONS IN INDIA

We have traced in an earlier chapter the three-fold division into which the Indian Press seems naturally to fall. There is first, the Anglo-Indian Press, so called, which is really the British press in India, conducted mainly for the small and compact European garrison, composed of merchants and officers in the civil and military services of the Crown. It is rich, and follows almost with great fidelity in the wake of the British press in England in its treatment of Indian news and Indian politics; except where an astute sense of business advantage has in these latter days impelled it to take up purely provincial questions. It has an efficient news service as compared with the indigenous press, and trained journalists look to its get-up and display. This is almost the only section of the Indian Press that Englishmen think it consonant with their dignity and Imperial responsibilities to take notice of. The writer of the article on "Newspapers" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* cares only to mention the name of the British-Indian Press as representative Indian papers, while, obviously much

against his will, he is forced to refer to the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, in view of its reputation in the earlier years of our history. The British Press in India is, nonetheless, something of a hot-house plant, patronised mainly by the small garrison of ruling people and their foreign allies who resort to this country for purposes of trade. Secondly, we have the Indian Press proper, that conducted in English, a representative and varied collection of newspapers and magazines of all sorts catering to different and differing sections of opinion, and ranging from the most modern and up-to-date examples to the most obsolete and time-worn ones. It is this section of the Indian Press which ordinarily reflects, moulds, even creates and influences the opinion of the educated middle classes, who are bound more and more to be the leaders of Indian society for a long time to come. The Powers-that-be in India have always looked upon this press with an eye of extreme disfavour, if not positive hatred. Where the form of government is but an autocracy, whose mitigation depends on the temperament of passing Governors and Viceroys, the Press usurps the power of what is the Opposition in Parliamentary countries. Lastly, there is the vernacular Press, written in all the cultured languages of India, in direct contact

with the masses of the population, and except in a few outstanding instances that are easily in everybody's lips, a pale imitation of the nationalist English section. It is a fact of contemporary history that, in spite of the illiteracy of the masses, the vernacular Press exercises a tremendous influence; for even in remote rural areas one finds a single paper read out to a large gathering of illiterate villagers by one literate. Here it may be parenthetically observed that the influence of the press in India is not to be measured by the actual figures of newspaper circulation. The habit of borrowing newspapers is so rooted, partly owing to the poverty of the country; and for every man who buys his paper there should be no less than dozens of readers. The vernacular Press is directed or owned or both by the English-educated middle classes, whose nationalism it has assimilated. Any newspaper in any of the Indian languages is very jealously watched by the Government, and very strictly treated even on the slightest pretext. Persecution is in good truth the badge of the entire Indian-owned Press.

The Indian Press is conducted in a score of languages and under conditions of the utmost possible variety. Nonetheless, certain cultural, economic and political factors have impressed a fundamental unity of spirit over the whole of

India, and we may attempt with due diffidence and care to describe the conditions of contemporary Indian journalism, and indicate the dominant tendencies. In our account we shall begin with the Indian Press using the English language, only referring to the British Press now and again for purposes of comparison. We shall then proceed to discuss the real Indian Press, conducted in the languages of the country, and try to determine the lines of its future progress.

The Indian Press is a child of the British Press; and what is more of the Victorian Press. In that single sentence are summed up both its virtues and vices, its strength and its weakness; and if at the same time we bear in mind the appalling poverty of India and the almost universal illiteracy, we have the necessary background for our enquiry. The conditions of life and work among journalists in India are sorry beyond description, and the hand-to-mouth existence led by most Indian newspapers has largely been responsible for the lack of enterprise. Mr. Shaw has taught us that poverty is a cardinal sin; and that sin pollutes almost every enterprise in Indian journalism. Robert Bernays, in his *Naked Fakir*, says of the Indian vernacular papers that they live only on their debts. Contempt of the subject and love of epigram qualify the truth in this remark; but in a general way

it graphically describes the extraordinary difficulties which journalists in India have to face. Yet the increasing eagerness with which the service of journalism attracts workers is not without its hopeful augury for the future. Everywhere in the wide world, the profession of journalism is an insecure one: today here, there tomorrow. As Morley has put it, it is a profession with drawbacks of its own. "It is precarious in the sense that does not affect the lawyer, the schoolmaster, the doctor, the clerk in holy orders, the soldier or the sailor. For the writer routine does nothing: the more it does for him, to be sure, the worse for him. Incidents of human life that in other walks are only interruptions, to him may be ruin. If his knack, whatever it amounts to, should cease to please, he starves; if his little capital of ideas wears itself out, he is dispatched as monotonous and tiresome; if the journal to which he is attached changes hands or changes principles or expires, he too may expire." But in India this insecurity is trellised on an unmentionable poverty and is at the maximum; while by the same token the material rewards are almost at the minimum.

One of the inevitable effects of this extraordinary poverty is the lack of independence shown by the Indian Press in the collection of news. Certain newspapers, notably the *Hindu*

of Madras, employ a staff of correspondents in many important countries overseas; yet even they are dependent on agencies for most of the news they publish. Newspaper readers in India look at the world through Reuterian spectacles. They cannot do otherwise. Some few years ago, the Free Press of India began a long over-due competition with Reuters. But for reasons that cannot be usefully or adequately gone into here, the enterprise failed. Personalities are often the bane in slowly awakening communities and professions; and in India even the exponents and moulders of opinion have not been able to look at serious issues concerning themselves free from the obfuscating fumes of personal prejudice and the gamour attaching to foreign associations.

The monopoly of Reuters and the Associated Press of India, apart from the suspicions arising from the grant of a Government subsidy *

(*) On the ethics of this sort of subsidised journalism, this is not perhaps the place to say anything. We have heard of the "reptile press" in Bismarck's Germany. Here it maybe useful to extract the remarks of the *Pioneer* (March 23, 1928) on the subject: "The payment of the subsidy gives this one concern an entirely unfair advantage over any competitors desirous of entering the same field, and tends to create a monopoly A monopoly in any business concerned with the collection and distribution of news has greater potentialities for mischief than that of any other kind. Partly, at any rate, as the outcome of the blundering policy of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments in continu-

has had very deplorable results on Indian knowledge of world affairs. One prominent Upper India newspaper had occasion to point out the pro-Poincarist tendency of the European news wired out by this agency. When De Valera began his fight with England, (1932) Reuter was at pains to assure us that there was considerable opposition to his policy in Ireland itself, and that all the Dominions were viewing his actions with alarm. But soon some of the reports were authoritatively contradicted. We are not sure if a more serious charge will not be laid at the door of Reuters in certain quarters. Next to India and England we are greatly interested in South Africa, where the Indian community is up against a cruel combination of circumstances. Things happen there that intimately concern us here; and yet Reuters manages generally to ignore all such news.

ing to subsidise the News Agencies we have referred to (Reuters Ltd., the Eastern News Agency Ltd., and the Associated Press of India), this country has been suffering for some time from what is virtually a news agency monopoly. The results have been in many ways deplorable, as the criticisms the *Pioneer* has frequently had to level at the news agencies concerned have shown, and it is high time that an end was put to the present highly undesirable arrangements." Even the *Times of India* was forced to write (May 30, 1931) that this Agency had become "almost a departmental mouthpiece" of the Central Government. *The Statesman* of Calcutta would say nothing, only because it is a bad workman who complains of his tools, though it thought there was far too much pro-Hindu propaganda carried on by this agency.

When Mrs. Sarojini Naidu visited South Africa Reuters eschewed¹ all reference to her, and one Bombay newspaper was moved to a vigorous protest. Another failure was in the case of ex-President Patel's visit to America, whereas those of British propagandists is seldom missed. To put it at the mildest, Reuters' sense of values is at times very faulty. The Indian Press can well afford to and should have another news service to check or supplement Reuters' news: if, that is, the Indian Press cannot co-operate to run a service of its own. Nor is there any attempt by Indian newspapers to work up items of news neglected by Reuters or only briefly dealt with by that agency, but which may still have for India considerable news value. America, Europe and Asia are almost absolutely uncovered by the majority of the Indian Press, and only a few among them employ a whole-time London correspondent. The *Hindu*, which alone among the Indian-owned newspapers has got a London office, has for long been, however, in the habit of employing its own correspondents in Berlin (latterly at Prague), New York, Cairo, Paris and in South Africa—though these are for the most part supplementary to Reuters.

Even in the collection of Indian news, they show an astonishing lack of enterprise. A very

few papers have correspondents in all the provincial capitals and in Delhi and Simla. In regard to such an important centre as the seat of the Central Government, it was the truth till a few years ago that no Indian-owned newspaper had the enterprise to employ a staff correspondent, but trusted to the overworked servants of one of our news agencies, who by some convention were allowed to compete with itself, leading in one notable case to very ugly contretemps. It happens occasionally that these agencies neglect a first-class event, as in the case of the riots in the South Indian principality of Pudukotah, for information about which every one was indebted to *The Hindu*. Very often even news about the city of publication is inadequately covered by the newspapers. Partly it is due to the over-worked staff; partly also it is due to the ill-concealed antagonism to the Indian Press displayed by the Government; and partly to the poverty of the press which prevents its employing enough staff.

These factors help us to understand the unbearable monotony of the Indian Press. Read through all the Indian newspapers, the majority of them at any rate, on any particular day; and one will find everywhere the same old news told in the same old way, and even perhaps featured under the same old captions. The

leading articles may be verbally different; but one can wager that on any particular day they are sure to deal with certain subjects. All this may speak well of the fundamental unity of India, but not of the variety, fecundity or resourcefulness of its journalistic genius. It may be pointed out that it is not different anywhere else. But the great newspapers of Europe and America touch life at a greater number of points, and display more individuality in the selection and arrangement of news and in commenting thereon.

It would be worth while to note the kind of reading matter with which the Indian newspapers are usually filled. Politics play a greater part in them than anywhere else. And there is good excuse for it; though it is doubtful if freedom of thought and correct party evolution are helped by responsible journalists allying themselves with political party, even to the extent of being principal office-bearers therein. In this as well as in other fields of national endeavour the truth seems to be that, just as a nation engaged in war finds the prosecution of hostilities of predominant interest, so a country experiencing the thrills of an incipient nationalism finds such politics as it can afford to have or is permitted to have full of fascination. Speeches in and outside the "Parliaments" of

India, by leaders of the nationalist movement, Mahatma Gandhi's political, ethical and dietetic conundrums, frequent and meaningless assurances given by British statesmen, in or out of office, of their earnest sincerity and undoubted sympathy with India's aspirations, latterly reports of arrests and convictions for offending the majesty of the law, now and then terrorist crimes, with occasional descriptions of nationalist movements among other oppressed nationalities: such in the main is the kind of news that is found in the Indian papers. More recently, however, the world economic blizzard has been given its due share in our newspapers, especially as it affected the primary producer with the millstone of an impossible debt burden round his neck. Occasionally one gets Miss Mayos and others of that character complaining sorely about the evils, real or imaginary, of the Indian social system. These find mild echoes from Indian social reformers. To vary the interest, one finds sometimes ghastly accidents, murders of a non-political character and other police court news. And there is of course the sporting column: races are sure to attract a number of readers, and English-educated Indian readers make it a point of honour to keep in touch with the number of wickets taken by Tate or the centuries scored by Hobbs. It is easy

enough to see from this that the magazine side of daily journalism is poorly developed in India. Of late Indian newspapers have begun to pay some attention to the cinema, the wireless and women's life: and these are about the only magazine matter to be found.

And then the leading articles! The Victorian tradition is almost omnipotent. Most of the articles are of a political nature, reiterating with tiresome monotony the age-old arguments in favour of nationalism and rebutting with the same frequency the age-old fallacies of imperialism, or long and argumentative criticism of particular actions and policies of the government. Indian readers seem to like solid, heavy stuff. Even the pontifical *Times* writes gay and light essays on appropriate subjects. But that is rarely the case here. The only time that one feels a tendency to smile is when a political opponent is being pounded to pieces in vigorous English. But nonetheless it is true to say that these leading articles are being widely read, and possibly better appreciated than the chatty, easy, persuasive essays of the modern popular press in the West.

If we might generalise with the requisite caution, we might say that the Indian Press is very inadequately equipped. Elsewhere we have quoted the graphic account of the manner

in which the *New York Independent* reported the sinking of the "Titanic." It would be vain to expect even the best-conducted Indian papers to rise to the occasion in that remarkable manner. Not long ago there was the "Phillipar" disaster at sea; and it easily lent itself to similar treatment, more so seeing that there were one or two Indians aboard the ill-fated boat. But Indian newspapers were content with Reuters' cables. It is no doubt true that Europe and America are better organised for news collection than is the case here; and the areas they have to cover are also more compact. Nonetheless it is clear that even in regard to the great Asiatic mainland, with which we are so intimately and directly connected, Indian newspapers leave the news untapped; it is equally clear that greater organisation on the part of newspapers and news agencies will pay. For example, in regard to the bloodless revolution in Siam and the agitated convulsions in China, Indian newspapers have been able to give their readers next to nothing original. Even the so-called provincial news might be much better organised and edited, in the place of the present stereo-typed chronicling of police-court and sessions cases. There is also room for developing new standards of news values based on the changed taste of readers. It has been observed that nothing so

changes the face of things political as the change from one generation to another. This applies with great force to journalism and the newspaper-reading public. The younger generation have developed tastes that were never dreamt of by their forbears; but the newspapers generally have lagged behind in anticipating or satisfying that taste.

Every cloud has its silver lining, and the picture of the Indian Press presented above ignores its great virtues. It was Sir Lawrence Jenkins who pointed out the precarious and dangerous life led by all Indian newspapers under the old Press Law (of 1910). A more stringent regulation is on the statute book to-day. It was recently held by the High Court of Bombay that the truth of a particular report is irrelevant in determining whether it falls under the banned category or not. Gaggling laws have always been there, and the Press, except during the brief period of the War, has ever been considered by the bureaucracy as an enemy in disguise. Notwithstanding the opposition of the Government, the poverty of the people and the general illiteracy—a combination of circumstances which might well daunt the stoutest-hearted servant of the public interests and lead one to consider India *prima facie* the Journalist's Inferno—we have created

in our country a Press with a great and irreproachable tradition. There was not a syllable of exaggeration when Mr. B. G. Horniman claimed for Indian Journalism "that it has maintained the character of being the guardian of the public interest in every branch of life". Considering the easy temptations offered to possible backsliding, the Indian Press has never been lacking in courage; and the spirit of independence it has ever shown is a valuable example for all time. It has been the most important vehicle of nationalist thought; and it has done more than any other single factor to bring home to the Indian people a lively sense of their unity. It will always be associated with the triumphant march of Indian nationalism. It might doubtless be thought that by allying itself exclusively with one school of politics in the country, it has so far prevented the free play of mind of the people on all subjects; and that the almost compelling posture of political leadership which had been forced on leading journalists has prevented a manly and independent weighing of political issues and party programmes, and put a premium on an intolerant attitude even among the nationalist sections of opinion. This is putting it too broadly; and whatever justification there may be for this charge, from the point of

view of journalism, the evil lies not so much in the men of the profession, who have carried their liberties in their hands and enjoyed them only by the sufferance of Authority, but in the physiognomy of the times through which we are passing. Yet, the examples of the *Tribune*, *The Hindu* and occasionally the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, ought to impel those who are journalists *pure sang* to take heart of grace, and pride themselves on the fact that the habit of a manly judgment on public questions independent of party interests is growing rather than otherwise. If only the Indian Press could follow to a much greater extent the motto of the New Press—Brightness, Brevity, Enterprise and Cheapness—it might well become the model press of the world. The charge levelled against the Popular Press in the West is that it has tended to vulgarise public taste and debilitate the same. It looks as though a touch of “vulgarity,” an occasional descent from the lofty heights of politics or philosophy, will do the Indian Press a lot of good and bring it nearer to perfection: so exasperating is the innate racial sense of the respectable operating on our more important journals. It must be confessed, though, that some new exponentes of this particular kind are only jejune without being interesting.

Most of the foregoing applies equally to the vernacular press. Only they are more difficult to produce, for the very good reason that news, and even reporter copy, have to be translated from English. Reporting directly in Indian languages is still among the hopes of the future; while not all the vernaculars have the latest type-setting appliances. The vernacular newspapers are more intimately in touch with the life of the masses, and have to their credit the gradual instilling of a knowledge of modern political forms and methods into the minds of the masses. Truly they are the greatest instruments for mass education in India. At the same time they are apt to take a too provincial view of things and to ignore all events not directly bearing on Indian needs. This suggests that the vernacular Press is likely to develop provincial patriotism in the very near future. Certain writers are fond of abusing in superior-manner the Indian vernacular press as scurrilous, immoral and unscrupulous. The late Lord Birkenhead, when he was Secretary of State for India, stigmatised it as the most illiterate press in the world. Miss Mayo, diligently collecting filth, seems to have found the advertisements in the vernacular press of a particularly spicy and interesting character. All these charges are based either on prejudice or ignorance. When

we mention the names of G. Subbramania Iyer and A. Rengaswami Iyengar in Madras, Kelkar and Lokamanya in Bombay, not to prolong the list unduly, we have given the lie to the sweeping assertions of men and women whose business in life apparently is to malign a people who have given them no cause for offence. Even in this hectic twentieth century, Mahatma Gandhi managed to make his *Nawajivan* the perfect expression of his personality, and used to set forth through its columns the age-old ideals of simplicity and truth, as he understands and observes them.

The Golden Age of the Indian Press is yet to come. An American journalist has said of the newspapers of his country, the object of so much fun and criticism to his cousins across the Atlantic, "that it has the vivacity of the French journals without their tendency to financial corruption; it has as full command of the official news as the German papers, without being the tool of government manipulation: to a large degree it has the solid worth and dignity of the British journals without their ponderosity, while in its various forms it represents the people of all classes more completely and sympathetically." Thanks to the influence of the British Press, we have enough and to spare of dignity and solid worth, not to speak of pondero-

sity. Let us cultivate a little more of vivacity, let us rid ourselves of the political obsession, and let the Government leave off its supercilious attitude, now foaming against the press. now crushing it under its feet, but ever snarling at it. Here is a simple recipe not indeed for perfection, but for what may be a near approach thereto.

CHAPTER XIII

THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

Prophets are always a gloomy race, pessimists to their finger-tips. There is however comfort in the fact that this is a notoriously sceptical generation which is not likely to be frightened out of the joy of life by Cassandras of either sex. For, there is need, abundant need, for hope and courage when trying to think of the future of the Press. Every careful observer has noticed in the appalling vulgarity of taste displayed by the "best-selling" sections of the popular press, and the lack of ability to reason out shown by democracies all the world over, mild symptoms of a future too terrible to contemplate. We are passing through an age which reproduces in its varying manner all the symptoms that preceded the French Revolution: we are passing through formidable omens to an era that threatens us with an immense revolution in the social, the economic and the political order that we know, or we have been taught to appreciate. Take your morning or evening paper; and in spite of the vulgarities or the sillinesses you may revolt against, you are

brought up against issues of moment that even the most courageous thinkers and statesmen quail in the contemplation of. It is not all that can look forward to the future with the serene optimism of Condorcet, who went smiling to his death a few hours after he had written a most remarkable forecast of the hopeful and happy future of the human race under the beneficent influence of democracy and education. We are disillusioned and cynical, looking with a suspicious eye on every panacea offered to us. Democracy indeed has come in certain countries; but it has rather induced, paradoxically enough, a contempt of the worth of the individual. Education we have had, which has tended rather to rancour among individuals and a confusing of the intellect. The unlovely gospel of dictatorship is in death grapple with the slovenly habit of leaving things to shape themselves—lest the forces of revolution should engulf us: a contingency that threatens all nations alike.

The problem of the future of the Press is bound up closely with our political and economic beliefs, our individual estimate of the complex and conflicting forces directing the potter's wheel that turns the world to-day. And what beliefs and what estimates! Our faith in a glorious future for the Press depends on our

faith in democracy, which is only another name for the ancient conception of the perfectibility of man. Even this is a subject, it would seem, on which we are not permitted any longer to hope. Science, the destroyer alike of faith and hope, has already arrived at the outskirts of our political faith. It has tried its best to shake our faith in a God, whom prayers could touch, and in a soul which survives the process of death. We were once asked to believe that when we had strangled the last king with the entrails of the last priest, we could remould this world nearer to our heart's desire. Kings no more have their absolute sway, where they have not been destroyed: as for the priest there is none so poor to-day as even to nod at him. Yet, alas! the world still goes on its vicious and miserable way, and our civilisation is chaotic with a vengeance. Mr. Pink has tried to show in his "A Realist Looks at Democracy" "that the law of diminishing returns holds good (or holds bad) in the realms of education and politics." Psychology is about to demonstrate the truth of a discovery made long ago by the Greek Heraclitus that this world contains a majority of fools. Then, naturally, we must say with Carlyle that it is the everlasting privilege of the foolish to be governed by the wise, and try to devise a wise aristocracy, guaranteed free from class-

feeling, exclusiveness, lust for power, and the tendency to degeneration in the course of time. This is what Mr. Wells has tried to do in his "Modern Utopia" with its governing class of wise and efficient aristocrats, delighting in self-sacrifice.

But these interesting speculations about the survival value of democracy do not lead us far. Government, one feels, is likely to be democratic in theory, and plutocratic in practice. It is also clear that the great problems of abolishing war, establishing a universal currency, and adjusting equitably the control of raw products among the people of the world are not to be solved offhand, nor in one generation, as H. G. Wells hopes, by the swift rise of a World-State. Old prejudices die hard, and we are apparently in for a series of blunders of the first magnitude, before the New Order arrives and the Golden Age renews again. Along with a blundering Democracy, therefore, the Press is destined to pursue its career, full of falls and faults, but lit up by faithful gleams of hope, and the blurred vision of an earth turned to Eden. And we may expect the newspaper of the immediate future to show no startling change in its matter or form.

Nevertheless, the menace from the advancing tide of trustification is clear and has to be

avoided. A democracy falling into the hands of arch-dictators of public opinion presents formidable dangers to all lovers of the public weal. Mr. Aldous Huxley, in his fantasy of "A Brave New World," has conjured up for us the nightmare horrors of the possibilities of organised spiritual tyranny. It is the vision of a world, in which the human foetus is produced in the laboratory, and grows in a bottle. There are five chemically determined types of humanity from Alpha to Epsilon. It is something worse than degenerate caste system. Everything in *A Brave New World* is regulated with mechanical rigour. The five classes live and act and think as they are expected to do, and for them there is nothing like freedom of soul. The colours are laid thick in the picture, but it is one which it is possible to visualise as the logical outcome of the tendencies that are dominant today in the newspaper world. Democracy cannot function well unless we have a free competition in the world of thought, among political and economic ideas. This is ruled out if the syndicated press should succeed in establishing an awful uniformity of thought all the world over. Trustification, though it has proceeded in the west far enough in some countries to indicate the dangers to freedom of thought and action, is yet held up by one

of those protective devices which the wisdom of democratic leadership has been able to compass. For defending the fundamentals of political liberty it may become necessary to overcome the menace of trustification by resuming, in some manner, sooner or later, the control of the press ensuring its independence and integrity.

Apart from the tendency to institute such a tyranny of thought, we must note that today the Press finds itself face to face with other and difficult rivals for popular favour. Every evening millions of homes in the world listen to radio music and wireless talks, accompanied very often by telegraphic reproduction of pictures. There is nothing to prevent all the news of the morning paper, and, aye, its pictures, from being relayed through the wireless sometime before the previous midnight. This may take the keen edge of popular interest out of the newspaper. So far this development has not actually come to pass. But clearly it is within the realms of possibility. But it may not prove so dangerous for the Press as seems at first sight. We have an instinct that relies on the printed word; and we do love to read newspaper accounts of functions we have attended and sights we have seen. And the wireless can hardly give us anything more than a skeleton of the news of the day; and

news without headlines and colourful comments is news dispossessed of its savour. We are accustomed to have our news dressed for us: and nothing but a printed page can do that. A broadcast newspaper is possible: but at best it can only provide raw food to the palates that are accustomed to taste all the choicest morsels that professional journalists have the skill to serve. One of the first results of a wireless journal might be a fall in the circulation of newspapers, sufficient perhaps to scare the business magnates and send them scurrying along to more profitable pastures: a consummation devoutly to be wished. Soon the Press will find that it can work up news-stories out of the hints given in broadcast talks, and that the field of comments is virtually its monopoly. More attention is likely to be paid to magazine matter; for, the reading habit, once cultivated, is insatiable.

Yet another rival in the awning is television, and we must not forget the talkies. One can visualise passing events, and the other can give accurate reproduction, noise and all, of a great popular event, a few hours after it actually takes place. A live newspaper in fact. But here again the human partiality for the printed word, the desire to get a coherent picture out of the welter of impressions with which any complicated event confuses the

untrained senses of the man in the street, and the subconscious groping of the masses for a lead in all matters of opinion are likely to prevail, and to ensure a safe career for the Press. Only more and more it will become an interpreter instead of a recorder of world history from day to day. It will be the elaborate expression of varying points of view. Its concern might become not news directly, but dressing up news.

So in spite of the prophets we might hope. The newspaper is not yet in sight of its day of doom. Born of democracy, it attained the plenitude of its power with the growth of its parent. And as the future, so far as we can see it, is bound up more or less closely with Democracy, the Press is bound to play its part. Even if Democracy fails here or there before an ambitious tyrant or a designing oligarch, the defence of popular liberties is a cause to which men will rally; and every State based on force or coercion—even if it be the coercion of the majority—will fail in its appointed hour. As the full-throated voice of democracy, the siren-song of the dictator, or the clarion-call of the patriot, the Press is bound to dominate the thoughts and actions of men.

THE FUTURE OF THE INDIAN PRESS

The Indian Press despite its honourable record of over a century is still in its infancy. It has for long been the voice of a suppressed (and lately revolutionary) nationalism. Cursed by the Government and indifferently patronised by an illiterate and poverty-stricken population it has been fighting for bare existence all these long years. And what a fight ! The historian of the struggle for the freedom of the Press in India will find his materials only too voluminous. Even under the cramped and cramping conditions so long obtaining, it has attracted to its service a singular and gifted band : men who have made their mark in the life and history of our days. The genius of our matchless and non-pareil S. Rengaswami, the scholarly breadth of view and lucidity of Panikkar, the judicial fairness and integrity of Kasturi Renga Iyengar, the pawky humour of Motilal, the stern patriotism of Tilak, the financial insight and constitutional learning of Rengaswami Iyengar, the latitudinarianism of Mahatma Gandhi, the mildness and dignity of Brelvi that conceal an unyielding adhesion to principles, and, not to prolong the list unduly, the humour and plangent periods of Pothan Joseph : we have here a galaxy of journalists that will do honour to any country. The Montford dispensation saw

two journalists occupying ministerial office and the finance portfolio in our provinces. Nor again should we omit to mention the gallant band that, with Prakasam and Krupanidhi at their head, had long been faithful to the falling fortunes of a great adventure in political journalism in the southern province. If so much has been possible in the days of our infancy, when we were frowned on by one of the mightiest engines of government in the world, what may not be in the future when, we are assured, the full noon of Democracy is going to come upon us. Obviously, therefore, the Golden Age of the Indian Press lies in the future. A serious attempt is yet to be made to liquidate the vast mass of our illiteracy: and not until we have a large literate population can our newspapers hope for aught but the present meagre circulations. The fascinating situation that provided opportunities for Northcliffe and Newnes, with millions emerging from the compulsory schools, hankering for something to read, is for us still in the future. With our teeming population, what a vista it opens for the circulation managers of our Press! Here indeed is the newspaper millionaire's paradise: but first the masses have to be taught to read and then to imbibe the newspaper habit. We may expect that very soon an earnest and

sustained effort will be made to introduce free and compulsory education. In a few years at the most, there is bound to be growing annually a newly literate populace, anxious to know something of the way the world is going, and eager to exercise its vote. Then will be the time for the Indian Harmsworths and the Indian Hearsts.

It is an interesting speculation what changes may come over the Indian Press when it is forced to woo its new clientele, now growing up in our myriads of villages. Obviously the so-called vernacular press is destined to come into its own and to play a larger part under the conditions we visualise, when there will be something like a revolutionary change in the reading public. The English newspapers, conducted by Indians, are bound to become alien to the genius of the nation; though for a long time to come English will hold its own as the *lingua franca* of the ruling communities and classes in India, and these newspapers will continue to voice the opinion of the well-educated middle and higher classes. They will retain a large degree of influence and will have their importance as expressing the opinions of the classes that are bound to control the governments of the future. Yet vernacular papers

will obviously enjoy more influence and power. These latter alone can effectively reach the vast body of voters: and they alone can hope for million circulations. Under the stress of competition these papers are likely to change considerably. We might in truth predict a revolution in this respect.

What will be the characteristics of the New Press? Certainly, it will be brighter and more readable: but it is doubtful if the genius of the race will ever allow it to emulate the Yellow Press and its garish vulgarity. We have been from times past a serious people, not given overmuch to gambling. Sports do not as such interest our masses. Chatty articles on religion, weather forecasts, helpful notes on agriculture, stories of saints, interesting short stories, details of local politics: these are certain to attract attention. The provincial news page, now a synonym for dullness, may be developed along more interesting lines. Sooner or later the present irrational division of the map of India will have to give place to a more natural grouping of the provinces based on racial and linguistic affinities. Communal and caste divisions cannot serve as the bases of political organisation. Dreams of Pan-Islam and of Hindu imperialism are so much dead wood, delaying it may be but in no way destroying the inevi-

table change. So when Indian provinces fall into their natural and reasonable divisions, the Indian Press will also be grouped similarly. Even if the change suggested above takes time to materialise, there can be little doubt that one immediate result of the establishment of a federation will be an intensification of provincial patriotism. The nationalist struggle had brought together on the same platform scattered provinces and created a unity that today is perilously like uniformity, and had imposed under the iron necessities of our actual political struggle an oneness of thought on the leading issues of the time that, in the nature of things, cannot for long subsist. This is by no means to conclude that India is peopled by a pack of warring wolves, kept at peace by benevolent Britain, a notion still fostered in certain quarters. To all Indians the fundamental unity of Indian culture is apparent and inescapable. But throughout its long history, Indian civilisation has shown a genius for decentralisation, without which it is doubtful if it could have survived. While on matters of national importance we are not likely to forget the sense of oneness induced by our common inheritances and latterly reinforced by the political struggles and sufferings in years of strenuous and even dangerous revolutionary

agitation, more attention will naturally be devoted in the future to our own domestic affairs; and we shall then learn how big a country we really inhabit. *Vis-a-vis* Britain or the rest of the world, India will show a solid front: by the same token Indians will ordinarily be absorbed in their own provincial affairs. These political possibilities suggest a great future for the vernacular press. Newspapers will be published in all Indian languages; and each will try to crystallise the genius of its language. The tastes and the prejudices of the man in the street and the farmer in his homestead will receive attention, and special pains will be taken to cover news of provincial or even parochial interest. The artificial interest which we are now forced to display about even the minutæ of European politics will be subdued, and a free India will look at the world in her own way.

This tendency towards parochialism, a chauvinistic provincial outlook, is among the more serious dangers we foresee for the Press in the coming era. It is not, however, unfortunately, a new tendency. Some of the best minds amongst Indian journalists had long noted this and been thinking of the manner in which it may be best countered. Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee at a press conference many years ago repeated a sug-

gestion he had thrown out in a volume of the annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, that something like the German institution, *Wandergutne*, an apprentice course for young journalists in different provinces, might be useful. One should like to add that an interchange of staff among Indian newspapers will be a desirable thing. The writer of these pages had, in 1920, an opportunity of discussing the question with Mr. Kasturi Renga Iyengar. A greater knowledge of provincial conditions might hereby inform journalistic comments, which in many cases is lacking to-day. Mr. Iyengar was quick to seize the potentialities of the idea and highly commended it. But he thought that it was not then practicable, however desirable it might be. Especially there was the difficulty of taking in a stranger, a short sojourner, into the bosom of an office: there was also the question of paying his out-of-pocket expenses arising from possible differences in the cost of living from city to city. For, it was of the essence of the idea that the salary of the journalist so deputed should be paid by the office to which he belonged. It is doubtful if in the years that have since elapsed Indian journalism has developed the ability to launch on an experiment of the kind.

The very essence of the position is that the

profession should first organise itself. In spite of its long record of glorious service to the country, and its single-minded advocacy of a spirit of patriotic unity in the country, Indian journalism has much ground to cover in the matter of its own organisation though it has powerfully helped forward the cause of professional and political organisations in the land. Its standards of professional conduct have no doubt been of the very highest: but this has been the result rather of the compelling influence of some dominant examples, aided in many cases by the innate dignity of the Indian character. And the absence of an organisation with authority to set down standards and to induce healthy emulation has been felt by the more sensitive. As a contemporary observer pungently remarked: "There is need for a virile, all-India body to protect the interests and fight for the rights of working journalists. In the absence of such an organisation working journalists have suffered a lot. There is no standard of payment, no security of tenure for them. Any Tom, Dick or Harry takes it into his head to start a newspaper, with a view to promoting political machinations or as a speculative business proposition. A lawyer who through newspaper publicity passes for a leader thinks he is perfectly competent to be the

editor of a newspaper, although he can neither edit news items nor write smart editorials; a cotton speculator who is innocent of even the alphabet of journalism and whose knowledge of the English language is limited, passes for an editor; manufacturers of patent medicines too have had their innings; any waif comes into journalism to do incalculable harm to the public and degrade literature. Vernacular journalism in particular has given infinite scope to all sorts of adventurers who play havoc with public life. There is no dignity, no proportion in the choice of topics or in the level of controversies. A private marriage, with which the general public have no concern, claims as much space as the Viceroy's speech." These criticisms, though expressed bitterly, are not wide of a reasonable mark. The wonder still is that the Indian Press has been so great a power for good. It has done more than all the institutions for liberal education in the country for a long century. The time has now come when the organisation of the profession should be taken in hand seriously. Though there are a number of journalist organisations, spasmodic or regional efforts do not go beyond being pointers on the road.

The character of our Press will depend mainly on the personality of the men who will be

controlling, inspiring and manning it during the coming decade or two. At present, all things considered, and mostly, impenitent idealists hold the field: nor could one wish it otherwise. If they reap the reward of their long suffering by amassing millions in the Golden Age, well and good; if not, there is the possibility of the same commercialism dominating the Indian Press as in the West. It is a pity we cannot very clearly see the future from the present, as the contemporary conditions are abnormal. What interests the people, or ought to interest them, at a time of nationalist fever, is no indication of what is likely to interest the people when they enter on the heritage of self-government and resume the even tenour of their daily life. One or two inferences, however, may be hazarded from some visible tendencies in vernacular journalism in the Madras Presidency. An innovation that held the field for a strenuous period was the quarter-anna pamphlet, published twice or thrice a week. It subscribed to no news agency, employed no reporters. It appropriated the salient points from the news of the preceding two or three days, and hung on them trenchant comments. The tone was obviously one of extreme nationalism. Revolutions are uncommon things, entirely clouding our sense of values: our sentiments enjoy the luxury of combining

selfishness with morality. And the mass-mind rather likes oracular pronouncements on the problems of the day, as if they were given amid the thunders of Sinai. As such the quarter-anna pamphlet with its strong nationalist sermonising, its peremptory treatment of persons with whom it disagreed, is not likely to guide us to the tastes of the humdrum future, when the country should have settled down to the prosaic tasks of self government. That day seems to be a long way off; and the quarter-anna pamphlet in the south has given place to the quarter-anna daily. But, it may still come back, as instruction and comments on news more than news are likely to be demanded by a generation newly awakening to the joys of reading. This coming era in vernacular journalism is fraught with infinite potentialities, and it will not be surprising if it first succeeds in getting a mammoth circulation. Northcliffe once asked his staff to "Watch Beaverbrook," as a rival to be noted. It behoves all journalists to watch the quarter-anna vernacular daily or weekly, whose day is only temporarily over, if at all, and not merely dismiss it as the frenzied product of our feverish days, the counterpart of the Yellow Press.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

Punch's hackneyed and oft-quoted advice to those about to enter the state of matrimony : every veteran editor is inclined to repeat it to the bright and bounding young men from the universities seeking a career in journalism. It is the oldest and the most precarious of professions, the graveyard of innumerable hopes. There is nothing like security of tenure for the journalist, as there is nothing like fixed hours of work for him. Hardest-worked and least rewarded, such is the silent complaint of many. The prizes are so few, and the places of danger and drudgery so many. Wickham Steed said that the only sound rule for those who would fain become journalists is: "Don't—unless you feel you would rather risk penury 'on the press' than earn a comfortable livelihood elsewhere." The reader who has journeyed with us thus far will have seen that journalism is not a mere learned profession, it is at the same time an industry, a business, an art, a liberal profession and a ministry. Lord Burnham speaks of both the "craft and the handicraft" of journa-

lism. This is the main reason why experienced men of the profession are generally so loth to speak of the craft, and so unwilling to extend eager welcome to the pressing throng that seeks admission, because they think they have literary ability or have ideas well worth propagation. Nonetheless journalism never loses in its attraction for certain types of mind. "There are some kinds of tobacco," wrote C. E. Montagu, "that make you swear while you smoke them: and yet you find, if you try, that they have spoilt you for smoking anything else. 'It never done no good time, yet I can't leave it if I will,' you say of one of these, as the soldier in Kipling said of the world. Journalism is something like that. Just wed her, and you will see whata shrew of a wife she make—but you never leave the dear termagant. All of us who have wedded her call her at some time or other every bad name we can lay our tongues to. She lets a lot of us down. She draws on us sneers without end from the bigwigs of literature, the mandarins and the professors. And yet just think of turning out for the last time of all from the lit, living office.....No, you can't think of it. 'It is too dreadful,' as Claudio said of the idea of dying more completely. This large part of extinction is not to be faced." (*) The same

(*) Oliver Elton : *C. E. Montague, A Memoir*.

thing was expressed quite recently by Mr. Leonard Rees: "There is an old saying that journalism might kill a man, but it did quicken life while it lasted. That was the secret of its great charm. There was hardly any calling which made such a universal appeal to the community."

Wherein lies the fascination of this profession? Is it the gambling instinct, the lure of uncertainty, is it the sense of delight at taking part in the daily weaving of a "pattern of the world's doings," the high purpose of influencing the public mind, that makes us turn towards journalism, putting forth our little gifts in the spirit of a high evangel, and facing life and its challenge? No other profession offers less security of tenure. The paper may fail, or the proprietor may sell it away at a moment's notice, and the journalists may "find that they have been sold like a flock of sheep by newspaper owners who find it more profitable to hand them over to other owners." Or, perhaps, he may be asked to advocate a policy which he thinks wicked and so hands in his resignation. One can no doubt in this of all professions enjoy the luxury of a scrupulous conscience. More often, the journalist is forced to be frankly a hireling, paid to advocate a certain point of view, and keep his own view in a compartment of its own, away from public view. Nice points of casuistry

very often arise in regard to this question. But it does seem a more venial sin to write a leading article with which you do not agree than to lend your name (being a bigwig in politics or on the screen) to an article written by a hack journalist for a consideration. To get out of a job is the easiest thing in the world : and that is why he is treated differently in one matter from clerks and secretaries. It is not counted against the journalist that he has flitted from one paper to another, not even if he hail from a paper with entirely terrible views. In fact, the Secretary of the National Union of Journalists once seriously advised young aspirants that "it may not be advisable to stay on one paper too long," with the danger of getting into a rut, while to move to a fresh paper "every three months" had its manifest disadvantages.

The life of a journalist is so very hard and exacting that his race, be the course ever so long, is soon run—young men most relentlessly crowd older men out, though so far this does not seem to be the case in India, where the present political conditions put a premium on propaganda rather than bright news presentation. Unless the journalist makes himself indispensable as a specialist of some sort or other, in addition to the easy knack of turning out paragraphs on all subjects in the course of the

day's work, he will find himself very early without a job, and unfit for any other work after having sold his brain and lost his vitality in this most exacting of professions. He will be soon a squeezed orange; one could even hear the squeaking as it goes on from day to day. And while the job lasts, there is tremendous slave-driving to submit to. As a reporter or sub-editor, leader-writer or caption-artist, he would have to devote all his hours to the profession. No hours convention for him. No fixed hours of work, and no rest. Like the ideal Boy Scout, his business is to be prepared ever and always. He may have planned a quiet evening with friends, and the call may come. And what strenuous work! Nothing slipshod or slow can be tolerated. It is always a race against time, and woe betide the journalist who fails! Physically and mentally he will be tired and worn out, and he must be able to stand all the hurry and the racket. All this torture and trouble, again, for a ridiculous pay. Even in the West with its higher standards of life, it is a sore point with journalists that they are underpaid. As it is, they owe a higher standard of living entirely to Northcliffe, who never tolerated any indignity to the profession and, whatever his lapses, was a democrat to the finger-tips.

Yet there are compensations. As Wickham Steed puts it, "as an opportunity for those who can seize it, and are determined to use it to the fullest extent in a self-constituted trusteeship for their fellow-men, it has hardly a peer." And the journalist has a feeling as of seeing history made, which not even a Cabinet ministership, with its unlovely cares, can give him. The politician may be in the know of things, and may feel that he is directing the course of history ; though the revelations that flooded on us in the wake of the War tended rather to present the politician in the ignoble position of wax in some master-plotter's hands. But a journalist always feels that he has more threads in his hands than the politician, who is now on the stage, in a moment struts his part and then vanishes in the wings, there to be swallowed up in the enveloping darkness. The work may be the merest drudgery, but there are moments when the journalist seems to get the very best out of life. As a reporter he may be following a hot chase, and land his scoop ; as an editor he may be planning a great news-story, the hunt and the display are all : as a leader-writer, it may be his privilege to write one of those winged articles that advance at a bound the cause he or his paper has at heart. No doubt he is working under the veil of anonymity, and all

the achievements go to the credit of his paper. But among fellow-craftsmen his reputation is secure: and the excitement of these rare moments abides with him, and is compensation for all the ills of the work-a-day world.

At even the worst, the journalist has a sense of power. His hands are manipulating the manifold strings of public opinion; and it is an exquisite pleasure to be among the moulders of opinion, and not among the multitude that suffer themselves to be led by the nose. At best he has a sense of duty well done. In the midst of the battle, he has done his mite, delivered a few good blows for the cause he believes in: and he has done, be it ever so little, something to turn the affairs of the world and the thoughts of men the way they ought to go. Was it not Scott who said one crowded hour of glorious life was worth an age without a name? The life of a journalist is lived in purple patches across a drab and, it may be, very discouragingly bleak background. And it is worth all the drabness and the drudgery of the daily labour. Yes: journalism is a jealous and exacting mistress, but none so generous of olden hours.

Who once hath dealt in the widest game
That all of a man can play
No later love, no larger fame,
Will lure him long away.

A perfect press may well be left to await the advent of the perfect man; and, in the days that are bound soon to dawn on us, there can be no nobler ambition to fire the heart of our youth, conscious of high ideals and striving to work for the public weal, than that of helping to carry on the high ideals of Indian journalism, as the trail has been blazed for us by an earlier generation, as far forward as they could carry it.

APPENDIX

TWO IDEALS IN JOURNALISM

(BY A. G. GARDINER)

I

No personal event since the death of Gladstone has touched the Liberal thought of the world more profoundly than the passing of Charles Prestwich Scott of the "Manchester Guardian." It is no exaggeration to say that it is felt as a bereavement, not of the country alone nor even of Europe alone, but of civilization itself. The fact is the more remarkable because Scott played little or no personal part on the political stage, and was little known to the general public even of his own country. He did not enter the House of Commons as a member until well advanced in years, and though he sat in two Parliaments, he occupied no official position, rarely spoke and retired just when the cause he had supported through the dark days of the Boer War triumphed in the great Liberal revival of 1906. He spoke little in public wrote nothing under his own name, declined all honors, spent the whole of his long working life in a provincial city, and, so far as I can recall, never had a London residence. Society, in the narrow sense, he did not frequent, and his way of life was unchanged throughout. He cycled to his office from his home at Fallowfield when he was a young man and he cycled to it from the same home when he was far on in his eighties, when his sight had grown dim, and when the country lanes he had once traversed had become busy streets scored with tram-lines. In all his personal habits there was a vein of

* By the courtesy of the *XIX Century and After*, the publishers, and Mr. A. G. Gardiner, the author.

obstinate conservatism which added a pleasant flavor of the past to the spiritual adventure he was always breathlessly pursuing.

His aloofness from the public stage was not due to the fact that he was a recluse or that he cultivated the role of the veiled prophet. No one was more free from that affectation, or more accessible and his manner at all times and in all society was marked by an equable and urbane courtesy. He was without the modern 'complexes,' either of the superior or the inferior variety, and, though he did not suffer fools gladly he was entirely unconscious of social discriminations. The negro preacher, Douglas, who visited President Lincoln said: 'He spoke to me as though he was unaware of the difference of color.' He would have found Scott on the same noble plane of human fellowship. It was the real values of men that alone interested him. For these he had a swift and penetrating insight. It was expressed in his glance. Before semi-blindness fell upon him, his eyes, dark and intense, had a searching and formidable power. They were the most remarkable feature of a striking countenance, and glowed with an all embracing intelligence and with inner fires that seemed visibly restrained by a masterful will.

There is, nevertheless, no real mystery in the fact that the passing of a man so little known personally to the public should have evoked so world-wide an emotion. Spiritually he had been one of the most powerful influences of civilization for more than half a century, and the fact that that influence was exercised, not by direct personal contact with the public, but through the vehicle of a newspaper only enlarged and emphasized it. Scott made the "Manchester Guardian" but it is also true in a sense that the "Guardian" made Scott. The two names were interchangeable, and it was impossible to think of the one without being aware of the other. Every newspaper that achieves success of any sort must have some per-

sonal inspiration, even if it is only a passion for power at all costs or for prosperity at any price. But the 'Manchester Guardian' under Scott bore the signature of a personality more definite, sustained and forceful than anything in the records of the world's daily journalism. The concurrence of the man and the vehicle had in it something not wholly fortuitous. Circumstances might almost be said to have dedicated Scott to his life's task before he was born. When John Edward Taylor founded the "Manchester Guardian" in 1824 he was engaged to the sister of Scott's grandfather, and the two families, though widely separated, became linked by the subsequent marriage. Both belonged to the Unitarian connection which, never large in numbers, was always marked by an intense intellectual life, an austere morality, and a grave attitude to public affairs. The proscription under which Non-conformity still laboured had bred in it a stern and unheeding self-reliance and a spirit of detachment from the general current.

It was a personal achievement on a scale that has had only one parallel in the history of modern journalism, and it is the contrast of the influence of C. P. Scott upon the English press with that of the late Lord Northcliffe that seems most deserving of attention now that both these remarkable men have passed away. Scott's career overlapped that of Northcliffe at both ends. He had begun his editorship of the "Manchester Guardian" when Alfred Harmsworth was barely out of the cradle, and he lived to direct his famous newspaper with undiminished vigour for years after Northcliffe's tumultuous and meteoric career had closed. It is in his attitude to the revolution which Northcliffe wrought in the world of journalism that Scott may be said to have made his most important contribution to the public life of the country.

II

That revolution was in a sense inevitable. English journalism had, at the end of the nineteenth century, reached a stage in which some sweeping change was imminent. It had remained essentially what it had been for more than a century—the vehicle of the thought, the interests and temper of the leisured and educated middle class, relatively small in numbers but great in influence. Its appeal was sober and restrained, its methods grave and unadventurous, its spirit dignified even to dullness. The great change which had come over the face of English society in the preceding quarter of a century found little reflection in its character or appeal. That change began with the Education Act of 1870, and developed with the consolidation of the trade union movement and the extension of the franchise which transferred political power from the few to the many. The centre of gravity in the nation had shifted from the middle class to the democracy, which had become possessed, not only of the rudiments of education, but also of a powerful industrial organization and almost complete political enfranchisement. But the press took little account of the transition. The penny standard still prevailed, and the press still addressed itself in the old way to the old limited public. The democracy had taken possession of the seats of the mighty, but the journalists seemed unaware of the fact.

It was an unrivalled moment for an adventurer. A new kingdom of immense potentialities was calling for a king. In 1895 the claimant appeared in the person of Alfred Harmsworth. He was a young man, still on the right side of thirty, who had already discovered the vast possibilities opened up by a generation of universal education. He was not the first in the field. Cassells had tried to exploit those possibilities, but their standard was too high and too educational for complete triumph. The true path had been struck by Mr. George Newnes, with "Tit-Bits;" and young Master Harmsworth, a youth of eighteen

or so, with his quick eye for what the public wanted and his adventurous intrepidity, plunged into the same path with "Answers," the prolific parent of a host of weekly journals of the "Comic Cuts," the "Funny Wonder," and the "Sunday Companion" type.

His success was unprecedented. He had imitators, but no one approached his sure instinct for the hunger of the rudimentary mind for information about the unimportant, for entertainment and for cheap sentiment. He had taken the measure of the man in the street, for he himself was the man in the street, with his eager interest in the moment, his passion for sensation, his indifference to ideas, his waywardness and his dislike of abstract thought. His energy of mind was astonishing, his ambition limitless, his vision for the material possibilities of things swift and amazingly sure. No grass grew under his feet and no scruples or principles impeded his path. The one touchstone he applied to men and things was the touchstone of success and moral purpose in any shape was divorced from his extraordinary genius for business. That genius rapidly passed to a new plane of activity with his purchase of the "Evening News." At his Midas touch that moribund journal leaped into life, and out of it sprang the greatest achievement of his dazzling career.

There has been nothing in the story of English journalism comparable with the apparition of the "Daily Mail". It found vacant a vast territory which it proceeded to occupy with an efficiency and completeness that left little room for competition. It applied to the sphere of daily journalism the discovery that Alfred Harmsworth had made in the weekly press—namely that what the democracy wanted was not instruction, but amusement and thrills. The press had been serious and responsible, respectful to the past and its traditions, cautious about consequences, suspicious about anything that savored of sensation. And in consequence it had left the democracy cold and

aloof. Alfred Harmsworth repudiated all these conventions. He adopted sensationalism as his gospel. Every day must have its thrill, every paragraph must be an electric shock, every issue must be as full of 'turns' as a music-hall programme. What's wrong with the shop window? was his formula and contained the whole of his newspaper philosophy. His shop window must be the talk of the town; woe to the window dresser who put in the quiet grays and left out the brilliant trifles! Policies were nothing, parties were nothing, principles were nothing. All that mattered was that the great public should be kept humming with excitement. There was always war in the air and some enemy against whom to arouse passion. Sometimes it was the Boers, sometimes it was the French, whom we would 'roll in mud and blood,' and whose colonies we would give to Germany. Sometimes it was the Irish; later it was the Germans. It did not matter whom, for Harmsworth had no rooted antipathies. He merely seized the handiest instrument for his purpose. If there came a lull in affairs and the public mind wanted rest and an idyllic interlude, then who so ready with his anodynes? He would set all the nation growing sweet peas; that it was dying from eating white bread and that if it would save itself, it must start eating brown bread. But these were only the 'entractes' of the great drama. War was the permanent theme and out of the Boer War the "Daily Mail" emerged with an influence that was unrivalled. People laughed and scoffed, but they read it and insensibly were governed by it.

III

It was not only the methods of Journalism that were transformed by the irruption of Alfred Harmsworth into Fleet Street. The whole structure of the journalistic system of the country was transformed also, not merely in the metropolis, but in the provinces. The main feature of that structure had been the independent daily newspaper owned by a single proprietor

or group of proprietors and exercising influence over a certain well-defined area. It had its root deep in the past and was in a very real sense an indigenous growth expressing the life interests and spirit of the community it served. By comparison with the modern popular newspaper, its circulation was small, even contemptible. Only two London newspapers had a sale much exceeding 10,000 a day, and in the provinces, even in great cities like Birmingham or Glasgow, a circulation of 50,000 was rare, while in the smaller towns possessing morning newspapers the figure was often nearer 10,000 and 20,000. Advertising on the modern scale was unknown, and the newspapers relied mainly on their local revenues. Their income was small, but they lived—often two or even three of them in one city discreetly and economically. They were an important institution of the local life, and their standard of service, if somewhat dull according to the present taste, was serious and responsible. Their main business was the accurate presentation of news, and their political point of view was confined to their leading columns. They indulged in no levities and were ignorant of the circulation-raising expedients so common in these days.

Upon this structure the impact of the Journalism initiated by Northcliffe fell with devastating consequences. The local paper withered before the competition of a journal which was at once cheaper and more entertaining, had command of vast financial resources, and was able through the development of newspaper trains and duplicate printing in remote centres to reach the breakfast table in any part of the country, as soon as the locally printed paper. The power of the new invader was increased by the enormous growth of general advertising and the extent to which his command of great national circulations enabled him to canalize that advertising into his own channels at prices which left the modest local newspaper gasping. It was, of course, this monopoly of advertising which was the goal in view. Great circulations in themselves do not pay. If sales were the

only sources of revenue, no newspaper could exist, for the income from sales does not much more than cover the cost of raw materials.

It is the advertiser who makes the newspaper profitable, and the object of great circulations is to command from the advertiser the highest possible price for the space he buys. The newspaper with a vast circulation loses heavily on the swings, but it gains more on the roundabouts. It was this conception of the commercial possibilities of journalism and his translation of the conception into realities that is the outstanding achievement of Northcliffe. From it sprang the mass production of journalism and the decadence of the independent press. There is only a certain amount of advertising available and the more it is absorbed by the great circulations, the less there is for the small. The result is the aggregation of the popular press in few and fewer hands, until to day it approaches the character of a monopoly. It would not be an exaggeration to say that half a dozen men, representing two or three great syndicates have access to most of the homes in the country. Where Lord Rothermere is not, there is Lord Camrose; and where neither is, there is Lord Beaverbrook. In London the "Times," the "Morning Post" and the "News Chronicle" still preserve their independence of the all powerful groups, and the "Daily Herald" as the organ of Labour is also independent. In the provinces it is only here and there that there is a survivor of the independently owned and independently edited type of morning newspaper which a generation ago was the commonplace of British journalism.

IV

By the universal acclaim, not merely of the public, but of the journalistic profession the "Manchester Guardian" is the most famous of these, and it is because it owes its distinction to C. P. Scott that the death of that remarkable man has been

the subject of such world-wide attention. He was the representative man of the old journalistic tradition as Northcliffe was the representative man of the new. By representative I do not mean that he was not unusual any more than that Northcliffe was not unusual. Both were extraordinary. But both were representative in the sense that they embodied an ideal of their calling at its maximum. It would be no extravagance to say of Scott, as Wordsworth, with perfect propriety, said of himself that he was a dedicated spirit. He brought to the task of journalism a high gravity that gave to his paper a severe, even slightly ecclesiastical, air. One was tempted to say at times that no institution could be quite so morally impeccable as the "Manchester Guardian" seemed, but one said it under one's breath and was ashamed of having said it even so. It was not that Scott was indifferent to the business aspect of journalism. The remarkable and sustained commercial success his paper achieved under his administration was evidence of that. But business success was only a means to an end. He saw that journalism was not merely a business in the sense that brewing or tailoring or soap-making is a business.

There was no question in his mind which consideration had to yield to the other to secure that harmony. When large issues were at stake, and what he held to be the cause of truth and justice was in one scale, and business advantage was in the other, he never hesitated. He was so frequently on the unpopular side that it might have been supposed he preferred it so and that he had a perverse love of opposing the general current. That was not the case. It is true that he distrusted the general current, had little sympathy with emotional impulses and adopted a detached and sceptical attitude to affairs. His feelings were always under the governance of the intellect. But he had no passion for conflict for the sake of conflict and was never happier than when the victory of reason over prejudice was won. He took great business risks, not under the

X

spur of emotion, but with calculating firmness and with full appreciation of the possibly unpleasant consequences. The result at the time was often what he had feared. That was especially the case in regard to the Boer War, when he threw the whole weight of his journal into antagonism to the popular current, and when the war passion ran so violently against him that both his house and his office needed at times the protection of the police. In that, as in most cases in which he took the unpopular side, he lived to see the wisdom of his policy affirmed, and the authority of his paper by that fact strengthened.

Indeed, the most decisive stride in its influence sprang from his courageous decision to support Gladstone in the Home Rule split of 1886, when most of the Liberals had left their leader and when public opinion was overwhelmingly against him. Up to that time the 'Manchester Guardian' had been true to its Whig tradition, but thenceforward it was always in the vanguard of the battle. It might be said of Scott, as was said of Ripon, that he was always in favour of the most advanced thing of the moment, and this was never truer of him than in his later years. His eyes grew dim, but his spirit never lost its eager quest for new kingdoms of the human mind and wider horizons for human liberty. His influence was not measured by circulation figures, but by his appeal to all the best minds of his time all over the world, and especially by the weight of his authority with public men of all parties and with the best elements of journalism in every country. No man was read more studiously by those who disagreed with him than he was.

V

It was a tribute to the inflexible honesty of his opinions and the disinterested public spirit that inspired them. It was a tribute also to the technical excellence of the paper. No better written newspaper was published in the language, and it bore

the signature of Scott in all its departments, for he had an extraordinary gift of impressing his own enlightened and rational processes of thought and expression upon others. He was careful to catch his journalists young—if they had the flavor of Oxford so much the better—and he would stalk a promising undergraduate for a year. In this way he created the most remarkable school of journalism this country has seen. To have worked for Scott was a certificate in journalism equivalent to a first in Greats in the scholastic world. Half the distinguished writers in English journalism during the last half century were licked into shape under the stern and discriminating eye of this martinet of the newspaper world. He would have nothing slipshod or garish. Rhetoric he disliked and emotion he discounted. High thinking must be expressed in plain, unadorned language and the appeal must always be to the reason rather than to the feelings. The air was a little cold, but it was always dry, pure, and stimulating. Occasionally, of course a mettlesome steed like C. E. Montague would prance and curvet, and Scott would observe it with an aloof tolerance; but his ideal was men of the type of Leonard Hobhouse who drove straight to the mark in clean, direct, unimpeded English.

Finally it was a tribute to Scott's incorruptible standard in regard to the presentation of news. On this subject, the most crucial of all affecting the prestige of the press, he said the wisest words that have been uttered.

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